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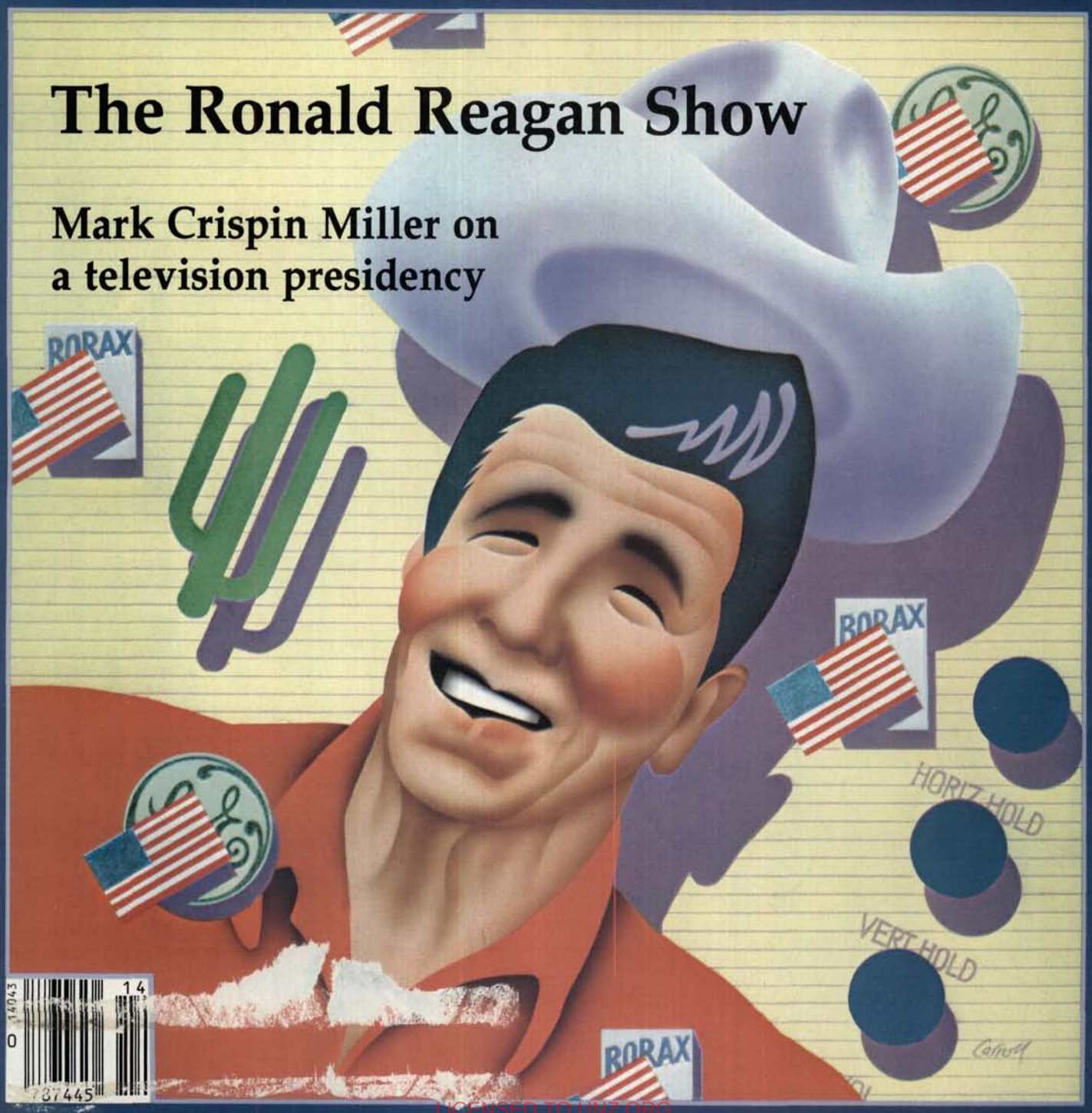
The FDR Who Failed

By James MacGregor Burns and Michael R. Beschloss

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Ronald Reagan Show

Mark Crispin Miller on a television presidency



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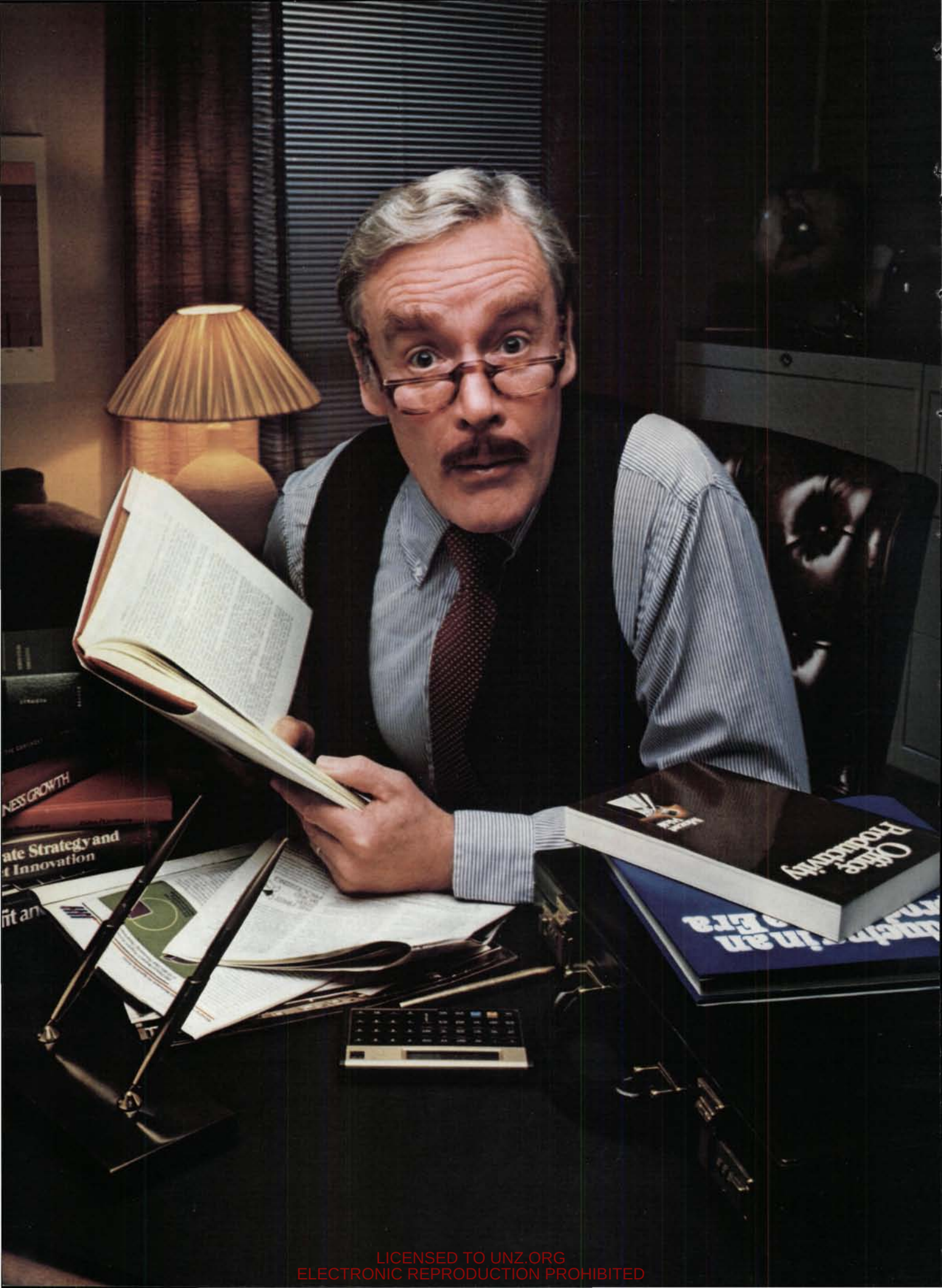

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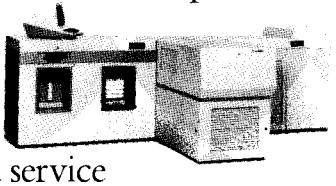

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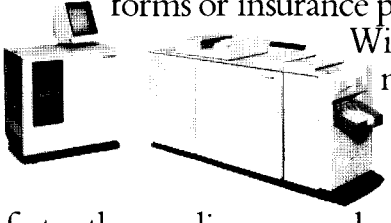

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

WARMING FREEZE

In an idyllic boyhood in Rumford, Maine, former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie says, "We bathed once a week in a tin tub heated on the stove." The immigration official who let his father, Stephen Marciszewski, into the United States mercifully changed the name to "Muskie." Later, as Secretary of State in the final months of Jimmy Carter's Presidency, Muskie had to deal with National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Just what an unfortunate headline writer would have done with those two names if Muskie's hadn't been shortened, I don't know. Perhaps it would have been easier just to say that the two men were "Poles apart."

Anyway, it was appropriate that Muskie took on Ronald Reagan recently in remarks made before the Council of Foreign Relations. This is the fourth time that Muskie has answered a President: he replied to Richard Nixon twice in formal addresses for his party in 1970, and to Gerald Ford after his State of the Union address in 1976. He is a persuasive rather than a pretentious orator. He does not "flash and zip his political commercials at you," wrote Terrance Wills, in the Toronto *Globe & Mail*, in 1969, experiencing him for the first time. "Rather he talks lon-n-n-n-g pauses to you. Their length varies from a short, pensive pause in personal conversation to a nine-months-pregnant pause during a speech, when he will look slowly about at his audience and perhaps unhurriedly take a long drink of water."

Muskie is perhaps milder today, but just as forceful. His message: "The battle for the soul of the Reagan Administration on arms control is not over." Muskie admits he can't tell, and none of us can tell, which side the President will fall on: is he ideologically doctrinaire concerning the Soviets, and believes that they must either change their system or go to war with us? Or is he the man of the November 18 speech who declared that "there is no reason why people in any part of the world should have to live in permanent fear of war or its specter"? He added, "Nothing will have a higher priority for me and for the American people over the coming months and years" than arms control negotiations.

If there is one thing certain in America today, it is that there is a trend—a firestorm—of mounting opinion in favor of meaningful nuclear negotiations with the Soviet Union. I do not think I have seen anything quite like it. It has leaped across the Atlantic in recent months. There were those town meetings in New England favoring freeze resolutions. There were statements by some 70 of the 368 Roman Catholic bishops. There were resolutions of Protestant churches. There were meetings all over the place. And it is just beginning. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* published lead stories about it. There was the whimsical comment of the Reverend Robert L. Herhold, a Lutheran minister in Palo Alto, California: "There will be nuclear disarmament as soon as the pro-life people discover that the bomb kills fetuses." And there were the agonized pieces by Jonathan Schell, "The Fate of the Earth" in the *New Yorker* (to be published next month by Knopf), discussing the possible extinction of mankind if we don't protect the ecosphere.

The curious thing about Ronald Reagan is that he rejected the proposal by Leonid Brezhnev like a pouting child stamping his foot. Brezhnev said on March 16 that he would halt further Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles either until an arms control agreement was reached, or the United States began deployment of NATO's new generation of missiles in Western Europe. Reagan could have said, "Sounds fishy, but let's examine it." Instead he denounced it as propaganda (which it was), and slammed the door. Most of the rest of the news that the peace-yearning world heard coming from Washington that week was about CIA plans to "destabilize" Nicaragua, offers of guns to El Salvador, and bellicose comments about Soviet involvement in Central America and Cuba.

Several weeks ago Senators Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Mark Hatfield of Oregon introduced a resolution proposing "a complete halt to the nuclear weapons race," a move that has attracted a few dozen senators and 150 or so representatives. President Reagan talks about it as though it is treachery. Muskie sees it as an effort to regain the long road back to a negotiating relationship with the Soviets. Soon, he says, Reagan must decide which side he's on. It is clear, he says, that some people around Reagan don't believe "in the constructive possibilities of the arms control negotiations." But he points out that his old colleague, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, feels it is time to sit down with the Russians and say, "We're both in trouble. We're spending too damn much on things we don't need. Let's talk."

Muskie insists that "freeze" doesn't mean accepting the world situation as unchangeable. It is not a dirty word. He says with grim satisfaction that it is a victory to find a single, simple word that encapsulates the whole debate on nuclear weapons.

I wish Reagan would get out and see more people who disagree with him. Presidents become prisoners of the White House. When Reagan travels "across the Potomac," as he puts it, he is largely protected from critics. The President has sometimes assumed a tone of wistful or injured reproach to the press and television and even to the business community. When his new fourteen-member Economic Policy Advisory Board, with impeccably Republican credentials, came to Washington the other day, Reagan didn't join it (though he met a smaller group). Opinion polls indicate that Reagan's credibility needs support. He could do worse than talk to outsiders who know the ropes—an Ed Muskie-type from his own party, perhaps.

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CORRESPONDENCE

A FAMILY FEUD

To the editors:

Theodore Draper is an astute political analyst, but on the subject of Vietnam his usual acumen has often been missing. In his review of Norman Podhoretz's book *Why We Were in Vietnam* ("The Revised Version," TNR, March 10), Draper criticizes Podhoretz for depending on my "deeply flawed book," *America in Vietnam*. Mr. Draper is entitled to his opinion of my work, but the specific example cited by him hardly supports this sweeping judgment.

Mr. Podhoretz (and I as the source relied upon) is taken to task for misrepresenting the meaning of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution of August 1964. J. William Fulbright and the Senate voting for this resolution, Mr. Draper points out, did not want to encourage President Johnson to wage a major land war in Vietnam. The purpose of the resolution was to deter the North Vietnamese from further escalation of the conflict. All this is perfectly correct, and neither Mr. Podhoretz nor I ever suggested anything different. However, the question is not whether Fulbright, or the President for that matter, in August 1964 wanted the United States to become involved in a land war in Vietnam. Neither of them did. The real issue is whether Fulbright, as he later claimed, was deceived by Johnson into supporting a previously planned escalation of the war.

When the American involvement in Vietnam deepened, Fulbright not only came to regret having supported a loosely worded resolution, but he argued that the resolution he had steered through the Senate had never been meant to authorize the kind of U.S. role that did in fact develop. The purpose of my lengthy quotations from the debate in the Senate (some of them quoted or paraphrased in Podhoretz's book) was to show that Fulbright cannot get off so easily. In order to demonstrate America's resolve to counter North Vietnam's growing support of the southern insurgency, the Tonkin Gulf resolution stressed U.S. preparedness "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." In his remarks during the Senate debate, Fulbright went out of his way to make this threat credible. The actions threatened included the possibility of landing "large numbers of troops" or doing "whatever the Commander in Chief feels is necessary." When deterrence failed, Johnson followed through with what the resolution had authorized him to do. One can argue over the wisdom of this subsequent policy, but it is not a matter of deceit.

That, very briefly summarized, was the role of Fulbright in the events of August 1964. If Mr. Draper wants to convince his readers that Mr. Podhoretz and I twisted the historical record he will have to find a better example than the Tonkin Gulf resolution.

Guenter Lewy
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Theodore Draper clinches his diatribe against Norman Podhoretz's book with the laboriously documented revelation that *Commentary* itself published articles in the 1960s and early 1970s opposing the war in Vietnam. Given the fact that (1) all these articles are a matter of public record, and (2) only three years ago Podhoretz published a book, *Breaking Ranks*, devoted to the subject of why he parted with the liberal left on Vietnam and other questions, Draper's charge that Podhoretz has somehow been keeping all this a secret is ludicrous.

It is indeed true that *Commentary* published many articles, including several by Draper himself, critical of the war in Vietnam and opposing our involvement in it. But even a cursory rereading of the articles Draper cites—and others he does not cite—will show that *Commentary*'s authors, again including Draper, took care—even at the height of other opposition to the war—to dissociate their position from those who wanted North Vietnam to win, and from those (not always distinguishable) who believed that the so-called Communist threat in Vietnam was a delusion. In short, the opposition to the war voiced in *Commentary* rested chiefly on political rather than moral grounds. If Draper now thinks this distinction is unimportant—or for that matter that the domino theory has been discredited—he should ask the boat people.

Marion Magid
Commentary
New York, New York

To the editors:

Theodore Draper raises a number of interesting points—but less about Mr. Podhoretz's book than about Mr. Draper's review of it.

(1) *About Communism.* Was Communism the central issue in the war that the United States fought and lost in Vietnam, or was it not? Mr. Podhoretz makes it unmistakably clear that he believes it was. In Mr. Draper's review, however, this important matter somehow manages to get blurred. Is Mr. Draper, one of the most distinguished living historians of the Communist movement, really trying to tell us that Communism was *not* the central issue in the war? This is indeed what he seems to be saying, but he is so unclear about the matter that we cannot be sure. He says, on the one hand, that "saving South Vietnam from Communism was never enough to justify American intervention. . . ." On the other hand, he invokes the "domino principle" as "the chief rationale for the increasing American commitment." But to what was the domino theory addressed if not to preventing the spread of Communist domination? Draper's writings are usually characterized by an exemplary clarity. That he is now so decidedly unclear on this central point can only mean that he cannot make up his mind about it—which is a very odd position from which to launch a polemical attack on a book called *Why We Were in Vietnam.*

(2) *About printed sources.* Mr. Draper complains that "Podhoretz's research is almost exclusively research into books by other people." He seems to be particularly unhappy about the fourteen citations from his own book, *Abuse of Power*. But Mr. Draper's *Abuse of Power* is itself a book "almost exclusively" based on words already in print. Why is it O.K. for Theodore Draper to write a book on foreign policy based on printed sources, and not O.K.—indeed, somewhat sinister (as Mr. Draper's tone clearly implies)—for Mr. Podhoretz to do exactly the same thing?

(3) *About autobiographical candor.* It will come as news to Podhoretz's readers, I think, to hear that he is guilty of some sort of cover-up in failing to disclose the details of his own political history. *Breaking Ranks*, after all, is a political memoir in which this personal history is spelled out in the most abundant detail. Or is Draper suggesting that the principle of full disclosure required that

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 7, 1982

BEGIN AT THE END?

As we write, the survival of Menachem Begin's government in Israel hangs in the balance. A tie on a vote of confidence presages further challenges to his rule, bringing together opponents on his left and the handful on his far right. Mr. Begin may hang on a while longer, whether through spurious appeals to patriotism or, more likely, through concrete payoffs to his coalition partners, thus eking out tiny pluralities from parliamentarians fearful of facing the electorate again. What is incontestable is that Mr. Begin no longer commands anything like the kind of political consensus that far-reaching policies require in a democratic society. This is not surprising, and the crisis comes not a moment too soon.

For Menachem Begin's policies are producing a moral distortion of the Jewish state, and they may prove its political undoing as well. That policy consists in poisoning relations with the very people with whom Israel needs peace and who need peace with Israel. Mr. Begin is under the illusion that the goodwill of the American government—or, more precisely, the recognition by the U.S. of Israel as a valued strategic ally—is much more decisive for the destiny of Israel than the goodwill of the mayor of El Bireh. He has, characteristically, lost the goodwill of both.

We accept Begin's argument that Israel's interests should be viewed in the context of the competition of the United States and the Soviet Union, and that the present position of the Soviet Union, and of its proxy, the PLO, is a considerable danger to Israel's security—and to the long-range interests of the U.S. in the Middle East as well. But globalism is not the whole story; there are also the facts on the ground. They too have political consequences. The Palestinian population, which, thanks to the Arab aggression of 1967, is in Israel's charge, can be neither dismissed nor forever dominated. At some point in the future, Israel and the Palestinians will need each other's cooperation and willingness to compromise. Without these there will be no peace. Thus far the Palestinian leadership has not understood this, and so there has been no peace.

Or perhaps it has understood it all too well. There is little evidence as yet of a Palestinian leadership willing to have peace—even on the most generous and conciliatory terms. Hardly a day goes by without one or another PLO "moderate" giving the lie to the much-touted PLO moderation. Here, for example, is one Arafat lieutenant: "There will be no existence for either the Palestinian people or for Israel unless one of them disappears. . . . There will be no peaceful coexistence with Israel." Deeds in Lebanon and against Israel confirm the murderous intent. Faced with such bellicosity, a different Israeli government might choose to go on a continual peace offensive, in pursuit of every conceivable mode of understanding with the Palestinian Arabs. But the warlike aspirations of their leaders have suited Mr. Begin, confirming his view of history and destiny alike; and it is beginning to appear that the impossibility of Israeli-Palestinian compromise will be part of his permanent legacy. His government has taken relations from bad to worse. There were many enemies before; now there are more. And against the eternal enmity of Israel's neighbors neither better planes nor better press will be of any avail.

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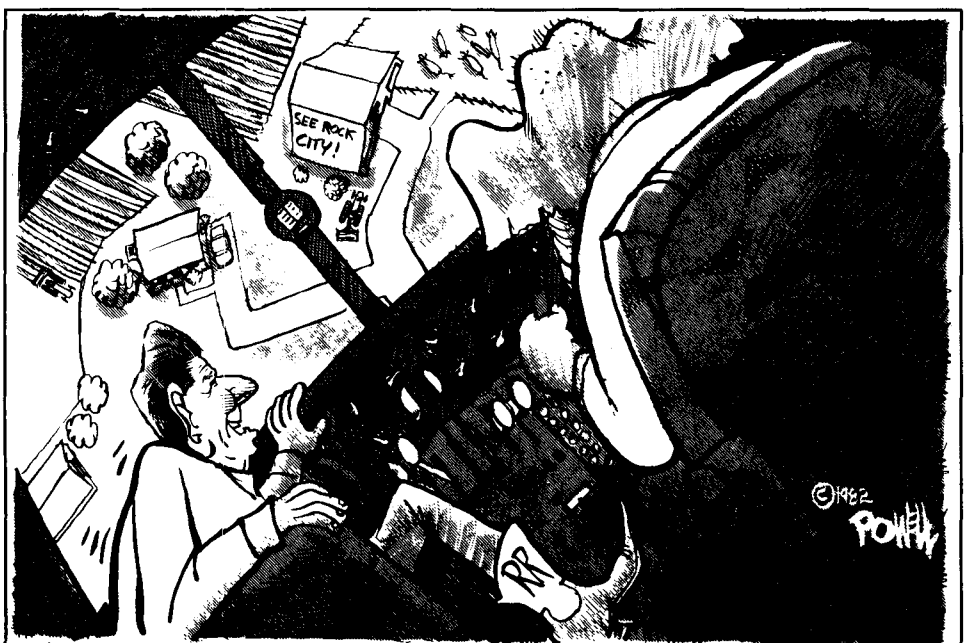
These worries spring from a number of recent developments in the occupied territories, the most explosive of which have taken place on the West Bank. Defense Minister Ariel Sharon has vigorously begun to implement his plan to reduce PLO influence on the West Bank. This is not a bad idea, because no Israeli government may be expected to deal with a Palestinian leadership that shares the declared maximalist goals of the PLO. It doubtless would have been easier to drive a wedge between the West Bank and Beirut fifteen years ago. But the "village leagues" Mr. Sharon has encouraged, made up primarily of traditional and rural leaders, are, at least, one Palestinian faction expressly willing to accept coexistence with Israel. It would be folly for Israel to ignore these people, who, defying PLO terrorism, have decided on moderation. But Mr. Sharon has been all too peremptory with those Palestinian leaders who haven't. He outlawed the National Guidance Committee, the organization of mayors that has been vocal in its support of the PLO. This group, it is true, deserves little sympathy; it has consistently inflamed the situation, in word and deed, and appears to have played a catalytic role in the massacre of Jewish students in Hebron in the spring of 1980. It seems to view dead Arabs, too, as assets in the ongoing conflict. Nonetheless, this group does have the potential authority to challenge the orders of Arafat and to strike out on an independent path to some new political arrangement for the territories. Its luminaries do not now show any inclination to do so. But their long-run political interests are different from those of the corrupt and indulgent leaders in Beirut.

Mr. Sharon has also now dismissed the mayor of El Bireh because he would not meet with Menachem Milson, the newly appointed civilian administrator in the West Bank. The mayor was replaced by an Israeli lieutenant colonel. It is impossible to imagine what Mr. Sharon thinks he has achieved by that, except that Israel can no longer point proudly to the elections in the territories in 1976, which were the only free elections held in the Arab world in a very long time. Mr. Sharon has also made a mockery of the transition from military to civilian governance. This was one of those purely juristic changes which so excite the finicky old-world lawyer in Mr. Begin. Another such was the change in legal status of the Golan Heights, the only real effect of which has been to make the ordinarily friendly Druze population restive. In the event, these empty symbolic acts have only proven to be opportunities for Palestinian extremists.

The rapidly escalating civil unrest in the West Bank has included general strikes and many demonstrations. In El Bireh a seventeen-year-old boy was killed by Israeli troops firing into a crowd. A second was killed in similar circumstances. Since March 6, seventeen Palestinians have been wounded in the disorders. There are occasions when a show of force is the appropriate, indeed, the only, reasonable response. But the problem now is more political than it is military. A simple military solution to a complicated political problem is a moral disaster. And the political problem only grows. Zionism may have created a Palestinian people, but Menachem Begin's Zionism is creating an ever more radical Palestinian people.

And the confrontation on the West Bank is not only between soldiers and civilians. There is a third and more sinister type in the territories: the settler who is righteous, angry, and armed with dogma and gun. The phenomenon of Jewish vigilantism has become a permanent feature of the situation across the pre-1967 frontiers. Settlers prowl Palestinian towns, weapons in hand, stopping citizens and demanding that they identify themselves. They smash the windshields of cars and vandalize property. Last week they brought in a Palestinian youth "for questioning," and badly beat him. Another Palestinian youth was found dead nearby, and not from bullets. (A suspect has been arrested in the case.) The settlers say they are acting in self-defense. "They use force, we can use force also," declared the secretary of the Shiloh settlement. The settlers' response to the stone-throwing of Palestinian



CARTOON BY POWELL (LOS ANGELES TIMES SYNDICATE)

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youths is to create the psychological conditions for greater violence. The Begin government does nothing to stop them; indeed, they are now Mr. Sharon's point men in his rough policy toward West Bank Arabs. They do the work that is too dirty for governments.

On the West Bank these settlers, who represent the state but do not answer to it, are preparing for a war between Jews and Arabs; on the Sinai they are preparing for a war between Jews and Jews. Over the past month an independent militia has emerged in Yamit, the largest town to be evacuated on April 25. This private army was formed by the Stop the Withdrawal from the Sinai Movement. Its "military commander" is a Gush Emunim activist from Eilon Moreh, the controversial settlement near Nablus. Its "operations officer" is a local resident whose room has been turned into an "operations center" full of military maps, walkie-talkies, and badges. Its "fortifications officer" is a student who has organized the sandbagging of the town. These people do not lack weapons. For years there has been an underground right-wing traffic in arms stolen from the army. And so they wait for the enemy. The enemy is the Israel Defense Force and Israeli democracy.

These "soldiers" do not want compensation from the government for the surrender of their homes, which is what most of the settlers of Yamit are demanding. They are mostly squatters, who have come to Yamit to "sacrifice" themselves for the sake of a Greater Israel. They wish to oppose Camp David to the death. The deaths they cause, however, may not be their own. Their automatic rifles will be trained upon Israeli soldiers. Unless the Israeli government reneges on its treaty with Egypt, they will fire. The plan, in short, is civil war.

WHY IS THE Prime Minister permitting this? Is he unaware of the magnitude of this threat to the authority of the state? Probably not, because the last time there was such a threat to the state, Menachem Begin himself posed it. He was not exactly a terrorist, as it is often claimed, but he was certainly a man who saw civil war as a legitimate expression of political differences. He was the commander of a dissident army, the Irgun, until 1948, when David Ben-Gurion destroyed it by ordering Haganah troops to open fire from the beach upon a boat carrying arms to Mr. Begin's militia. That is frequently referred to as a dark day in Israel's history. It was not a dark day, it was a necessary day; another such day will be necessary soon. It is long overdue. Like Mr. Begin three decades ago, the madmen of Yamit strike at the heart of the Jewish polity. Now it is Mr. Begin whom history has called upon to give the order, and so far he has failed to do so. This is reason enough for the erosion of his moral authority.

Like another politician we know, Mr. Begin is obsessively fixed on the past. The government is about to issue stamps commemorating the assassins of Lord Moyne, the British Minister of State for the Middle East who was killed in Cairo in 1944. A commission has been established to reopen the inquiry into the murder of Chaim Arlosoroff, a leader of Labor and mayor of Tel Aviv, committed to Arab-Jewish conciliation, who was shot in 1933. Three ultra-nationalist Zionists were charged, and, though they were eventually acquitted, the deed has haunted the Israeli right every since. This is all part of Mr. Begin's vast scheme slowly to rewrite the history of the state. It also shows how petty a man he is, a settler of old scores, not simply with the Arabs, but with the British and with mainstream Zionists as well.

Mr. Begin's tolerance of Jewish militarism and his intolerance of Palestinian nationalism may soon be put to the judgment of Israeli public opinion. The stakes are very high; they demonstrably include many of the spiritual and material achievements of Zionism. Because this is so, we hope that the Labor Party is restored to power. But those who criticize Israel must demonstrate some awareness of the exquisite dilemmas that Israel confronts. The perils that country faces are enormous, and they are not diminished simply because international organizations and major voices in the Western media prefer to deny them. The political struggle now taking place in Israel should, in fact, be morally reassuring because the conscience that has been aroused there, the qualms provoked by government policies among press and people, emerge even in the absence of a clear alternative to Mr. Begin's approach to the Arabs. That is why tragic contingencies are always in attendance at the controversies around Israel: there are no self-evident marching orders, even for and from that country's most ardent doves. Where are the doves in the Arab world? In which Moslem parliaments have there been attacks of conscience against policy?

These absences explain why the unbalanced coverage of events in the Middle East so disheartens all Israelis, not least those with the greatest goodwill. They are stoical about the fact that it is Syria, fresh from its massacre of thousands of civilians in Hama, which has brought the complaint against Israel's actions in the West Bank before the U.N.; not many will note the irony. But the Israelis are entitled to a greater respect for their predicament and for the truth from the American opinion industries than they now receive, and certainly less *Schadenfreude.* (An editorial in the *Washington Post* on March 23, for example, begins, "Israeli soldiers shot some more Arab kids yesterday. It is a familiar spectacle. . . ." The mere tone of that implication is maliciously false.) Menachem Begin has been a set-up for those intent on distortions, though they pre-date his rise and will survive it. But he has made their job easier. May his days in office be numbered, for everybody's sake and particularly for that of his own people.

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NOTEBOOK

□ IT COULD BE WORSE DEPARTMENT: Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina doesn't like recent U.S. policy in Central America. Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Latin America subcommittee, Helms gave a speech on February 5 in Galveston, Texas, outlining his version of Latin developments. "The Soviet strategy is to encircle and surround the U.S. with socialist nations," he said. "It is a strategy which can be dated from the start of the Carter Administration. It is a strategy made possible by the giveaway of the Panama Canal." Castro then realized that the U.S. was weak, Helms said, and moved to unite the leftist opposition to overthrow the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. "Castro received major assistance from Panama and from the Carter Administration. . . . It became official U.S. government policy to use all of our leverage to force President Somoza out. . . ." Phase Two is under way in El Salvador, where "the Christian Democrats are left-wing socialists" and their land reform efforts "amounted to expropriation of the principal assets of the country." Helms complained that the Reagan Administration has kept many of Carter's personnel and policies, which he called a "compromise with Marxism." We can only shudder to think what U.S. foreign policy would be like if Helms had more influence. It's enough to make one clutch Ronald Reagan to one's breast. More, it's reason to work like hell for a Democratic Senate.

□ THE PROBLEM with Hollywood folk, it has been said, is that they can't tell the difference between script and reality. This may explain why, despite all the evidence that his economic program is not working and won't, the President remains serene: he has memorized his lines and he is into the part. But he is not so attached to the script—or to the script alone—that he won't cite such facts as he finds to bolster his views. Meeting not long ago with members of his National Productivity Advisory Committee, he reproached those who were pessimistic about economic prospects and mustered, as indications of approaching economic robustness, the nationwide buying spree in Atari video games and the variety of Rubic's cubes books being published. It seems more likely that the buyers of these items are taking a cue from the Administration's economists, and escaping into a world of fantasy.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Another invention in the printing trade gives a fresh threat of technological unemployment. A machine has now been invented which, through the use of the photo-electric cell, sets type automatically from typewritten copy, without human intervention. Accounts of it in the daily press describe it as being sufficiently developed for commercial use. If these reports are correct, it would seem that large numbers of operators of linotype and similar machines, used in setting books and the news and editorial columns in periodicals, may presently face unemployment. They have already been threatened by the teletypesetter, a device now in practical operation, permitting any number of linotype machines to be operated simultaneously from a master keyboard which may be located a thousand miles away. Still another recent device which may prove of importance is a 'justifying typewriter' which produces lines of equal length; a page of its copy can be photographed and a printing plate prepared, so the inventor claims, at substantially less than the present cost of typesetting. Mechanical invention marches steadily forward, with small concern for the train of human suffering which, at least temporarily, it leaves behind." ("The Week," TNR, April 6, 19??.)

What do you call a Marxist with a gun?

LENIN'S TROOPS

THE WESTERN PRESS almost invariably refers to the Salvadoran guerrillas as Marxist. So too the regimes in places like Angola and Ethiopia. A generation ago they would have been called Communist. During the Vietnam War that is what we called our enemies. In fact, the use of the word "Communist" in Vietnam helped to discredit it, and rightly so, because it carries the implication of a monolithic world movement and external control from Moscow (or Peking). Another reason the word is rarely heard these days is its use during the McCarthy era as an infinitely elastic category with which to destroy political opponents. Now we speak not of Communists, but of Marxists. It is no improvement. The new term is as deceptively elastic and conveniently vague as the one it was intended to replace.

Of the three patron saints of Communism, Stalin is the least popular today, particularly in the West. Particularly since Khrushchev's 1954 speech exposing Stalin's crimes, and the 1956 invasion of Hungary, Stalinism has become a term of opprobrium. West of the Urals it is hard to find any Communist, except perhaps a few diehards in Portugal or Albania, with anything good to say about Stalin. Indeed, Stalin has been a useful alibi for Communist apologists for decades. The dismal historical record of Communist rule can always be dismissed as a mere Stalinist perversion of true Communism.

True Communists, like Castro, prefer to call themselves Marxist-Leninists. But Lenin, part two of the

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trinity, has recently suffered setbacks in the West. The latest blow was Susan Sontag's discovery that Leninism is intrinsically tyrannous. She was not just picking off easy (that is, Stalinist) targets like the Soviet Union, but erstwhile third world paragons of Communism like Cuba and Vietnam. She checked the record in "countries in which a Communist—that is, a Leninist—party has taken power and rules," and found that "*every one* of these countries is a tyranny" (her emphasis). The fact that she has been violently denounced for this Galilean discovery by many of the left indicates that there is still some sympathy for Leninism among American radicals. Nevertheless, it seems safe to predict that the Leninist rear guard will end up in the same historical rubbish heap to which the Stalinists repaired after 1956.

That leaves Communists with only one respectable eponym to cling to: Marx. Indeed, it is no accident that a whole unsavory stew of Stalinist and Leninist despots in the world prefers the title Marxist. For obvious reasons. Marxist sounds so bookish: theoretical, critical, humane, and, ultimately, optimistic. It conjures up images of afternoon tea, tweeds and elbow patches, professors seeking to change the world, yes, but by understanding it first.

MARXIST IS A TERM well suited to academia. It is a fine description for an historian who uses the class theory of history, an economist who clings to the labor theory of value, or a philosopher beguiled by nineteenth-century dialectics. As followers of a certain philosophic tradition, they have as much right to call themselves Marxists as certain Anglo-Saxon philosophers have to call themselves Benthamites. Both claims are declarations of intellectual genealogy. But just as we would hesitate to say American boys stormed the shores of Anzio in the name of Benthamism, we should hesitate to speak of guerrillas who blow up bridges in preindustrialist and precapitalist El Salvador as Marxists.

When speaking of men of action, those either in power or aspiring to power, the word "Marxist" is either an empty category conveying no information or a confusing one designed to obscure crucial information. I suggest that we abolish it. For it is used to describe two types of social revolutionaries. One type—the vast majority of "Marxist" rulers and guerrillas—practices democratic centralism (meaning authoritarianism) in its own party structure; believes in single-party dictatorship and state control of the means of production; and opposes pluralism—not only in politics, but in art, science, and social relations. In other words, this type meets all the operational criteria for Leninism. The other type believes in individual rights against the state, has a concept of limited government that allows a private sector in social and economic life, and tolerates democratic forms in government, including a plurality of parties and a rotation of power. However much they may draw inspiration from Marx, these "Marxists" are, in effect, social democrats or socialists. They may differ from the Socialist International on some points of theology, like their vision of the end of days, but outside of church they look just like Social Democrats.

TO CALL BOTH types of revolutionaries Marxist is simply to obscure distinctions, to confuse two radically different philosophies of power. It allows the social democrats to be tainted by the antidemocratic Leninists, and the Leninists to enjoy borrowed sympathy due the social democrats.

It is incongruous to speak of Marxism when speaking of those in power or those aspiring to it, because Marx had so little to say about what postrevolutionary government would be like. Marx was eloquent in describing capitalism, but cryptic on Communism. True, Marx did have contempt for parliamentary forms, individual rights, and private economic structures. He did believe in a vanguard party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. But that doesn't make Marx directly responsible for the Gulag. He certainly believed dictatorship to be a temporary expedient, because the proletarian revolution was bound to transform human nature, making the state unnecessary.

Today's "Marxist" revolutionaries are under no illusion that they will wither away after victory. As soon as they seize power, they will need instruction on organizing the secret police, the "committees for defense of the revolution," centralized control of the army, the economy, and ultimately the populace. But they will learn little about that from Marx, a lot from Lenin.

For Mengistu Haile Mariam to succeed in being referred to as the Marxist leader of Ethiopia is surely a triumph of public relations. The universal characterization of the Salvadoran guerrillas as Marxists (even Jesse Helms calls them that) is a veritable PR coup. One imagines the guerrillas sitting around their campfire

CARTOON BY BEN SARGENT (UNITED FEATURES SYNDICATE)

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in their mountain redoubt engaged in responsive reading of *Das Kapital.* The men with the guns—for example, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, the grand old man of the Salvadoran revolution—are proud of the title "Marxist-Leninist." Western observers are not. They find the "Leninist" part too embarrassing to mention. Unfortunately, for Carpio and his men it is the operational clause.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

A second opinion.

THE PRESIDENT'S MIND

IN HIS typically fair and tough-minded discussion of "Reagan's I.Q." (TNR, March 24), Morton Kondracke tries to lay to rest the issue of what might be called the President's Oakland problem—is there any there there?—saying that the press should forget about Ronald Reagan's intelligence quotient and attend to the numbers that really matter, like the prime rate and the unemployment rolls. These are indeed important numbers, but reporters and the public generally, I think, should pay the closest attention to the President's intelligence—and, more important, to his mind.

Mind refers to the quality and kind of a person's thoughts, feelings, and volitions, and to the fusion of these things in the complex whole we call the self. Intelligence is to a mind as a limb is to a body. When we apply this wider idea of mind to Mr. Reagan, we have reason to tremble that the country is in his hands, because the mark of his mind is its lack of seriousness.

By seriousness of mind, I mean three relatively modest qualities: first, the ability to recognize logical contradiction; second, the ability to change or modify one's ideas when confronted with facts that contradict them; and third, the ability to monitor the consequences of one's actions and to adopt a different course if those consequences are not as one's ideas represented them. The first two qualities are sheerly cognitive; the third, both cognitive and moral. Mr. Reagan shows no sign of possessing any of them. Dumb he may or may not be, but he clearly is not serious.

The President's economic policy—to cut taxes, increase expenditures, and balance the budget simultaneously—shows that he is a stranger to the law of logical contradiction. But his relation to facts is even more tenuous. He finds it next to impossible to say anything that is not in some crucial way untrue. He has a disposition to distort and to caricature. It's not a credibility gap, for there is no evidence of cynical or even conscious duplicity. The President is so far out of touch that it amounts to a reality gap.

His mind does not proceed according to logical or empirical principles. It works in an essentially imagistic way. Its most characteristic device is the figure of speech known as synecdoche: the use of a part to stand for a whole. Again and again Mr. Reagan uses this device, in the form of anecdotes. And again and again the parts he uses to stand for the whole—from the celebrated Chicago "welfare queen" who did not exist to the recent slander of the disabled Virginia welder whom the President accused of taking welfare while working—are shown to be false. Even if they were true, that would be small comfort, for complex social realities still would have been reduced to simple, and by no means typical, examples. But the President's anecdotes are not true. Which means that he represents social reality to himself with false images, and then, guided by a light that is darkness, acts into that reality. All is illusory—except the real pain caused by these false metaphors.

THE PRESIDENT styles himself a quintessential American, yet as the most ideological of our Presidents, he rarely evinces the native bent of mind called pragmatism. Pragmatism, as an explicit philosophy, was a complex intellectual development, but in its main emphases it was an attempt to apply the scientific method to the perennial questions of philosophy. The pragmatist does not merely believe his ideas are right in the manner of the ideologue; he tests them by their consequences. If the consequences are other than those predicted by his ideas, he changes his ideas accordingly. He is saved not by belief but by works. His motto is: by their fruits ye shall know them.

This intellectual procedure is the genius of American civilization. By all the evidence of his Presidency, it is unknown to Mr. Reagan. His economic policies were to have produced a surge of confidence among business people; instead, the massive budget deficits created by the logical and empirical flaws of his economic program have created dismay in those very circles. Has the President changed his policy in line with these consequences? He has not. He remains fixed in *a priori* belief.

Blind to the cognitive side of pragmatism, the President also fails to display its moral side. For if he really believes that his cuts in social programs are not inflicting pain on thousands of our most vulnerable citizens, then he is not attending to the consequences of his actions, and is a careless man in the literal sense of that word: he does not care.

All of our recent Presidents have been victims of the Xanadu effect. Prisoners of their office, they see no one outside the ring of the sycophants and lickspittles who surround them. Most of them have been rich, with the accompanying incurable ignorance of what life is like for most people. And all of them, from Kennedy to Reagan, have repeatedly politicized the facts of our

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condition. But in Reagan these structural flaws of the office in the media age are compounded by an intellectual slovenliness which, in a job where power could not disguise incapacity, would brand a man a fool. At a dangerous moment in our history, we are being led by such a man. That, whatever the prime rate, is reason to worry.

JACK BEATTY

THE GILDED AGE

BOOM-BOOM-BA-DOOM

THE REAGAN PLAN for growth and prosperity is on track and moving toward new records in business bankruptcies, home foreclosures, layoffs, and wage cuts. The damage to the blue-collar world is already apparent (see "The War on the Poor," by Nick Kotz, TNR, March 24), but it'll be months before we see just how successful David Stockman et al. have been in reducing the standard of living of white-collar and professional workers.

The easy one to identify is the 10 percent pay cut being absorbed by office workers in a number of federal agencies who have been told to stay home every tenth working day. The salary cuts in the white-collar work force of notorious cripples like International Harvester also get mentioned in the business press, but there are no figures on the companies that have cut medical insurance benefits, expense accounts, vacations, bonuses, and even straight compensation for their office forces. Suffice it to say that this is the first recession since 1949, and people with college degrees have learned that they are expected to do the same amount of work, or more, for less compensation.

Reagan began telling the country thirteen months ago that the tax system had to be rejiggered to encourage investment in new, high-productivity machines in order to make American business costs competitive. So far, there has been no investment in new machines; the productivity increases, if there are any, have been achieved by putting fewer coppers in the pay envelopes. It's newly cheap American labor against traditionally cheap foreign labor.

This is the hour of betrayal of the good little girls and the good little boys, when the coachman who drives them to Candyland laughs and delivers the bad news. Yesterday's youth who sat attentively through sixteen or twenty-four years of schooling on the promise of plenty have been double-crossed. Millions who thought of themselves as independent professionals with status, dignity, and personal power are learning they are employees. If the 1970s was a time of studying the patterns of passage in our lives, of personal identity crises, the 1980s will be the decade of social identity crises. Reaganomics is conducting a strip search of the middle class.

There are other humiliations and disasters. For the past ten years, the middle class, knowing that money in the bank would get chewed up by inflation, put its savings in real estate. It was the ever appreciating price of the house that people counted on. "I paid $38,000 for it in 1969. It's worth $225,000 now, and God knows what when I retire." God and the free market know what it's worth in March 1982: 20 percent less than it was worth in March 1980. But you meet people everywhere who tell you, "My house is worth $200,000 in normal times," their way of denying that their house, the repository and the substance of ten years of savings, has lost a considerable chunk of its value. What this means in terms of plans postponed and dreams deferred we will be told by the financially despoiled when the numbness wears off. What it means in terms of economic behavior we're seeing already. People are spending less. If you suspect you're only worth half as much as you thought you were a year ago, you're not so carefree in your spending. For the middle class, there is no difference between this sudden drop in the price of houses and a bank failure.

NOT THAT WE don't have them, too. One of the minor crown jewels in the Reaganian diadem is the first genuine depositor bank panic since the early 1930s. It occurred in February at the Hartford Federal Savings and Loan Association, and, by the account of Hartford's chairman, Christopher Carriuolo, it looked just like a good old-fashioned run on the bank. It's unclear whether the depositors were literally standing in the lobby waving their passbooks, but $3 million was yanked out of the place in a matter of hours.

Hartford didn't go under, but a lot of savings banks and savings and loan associations, the so-called thrift institutions, are doing just that. (See "The Thrift Gift," TNR, February 24, for an account of the Reagan Administration's efforts to help them.) They're going down at the rate of one a week. That's nothing like the early 1930s, when banks and thrifts alike were tumbling faster than tenpins at a championship bowling tournament, but the velocity is higher than anyone still too young to be on Social Security has ever seen.

As in commercial banks, all accounts in the thrifts are insured up to $100,000. There's approximately $7 billion in the insurance fund, but if you add up all accounts in the S&Ls that are in trouble, the total comes to a lot more. So Congress could have to pony up untold extra billions to pay off the insurance obligations. To forestall the mess that would follow a wave of outright thrift collapses, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the agency that regulates the thrifts, has been trying to merge the weak S&Ls with the strong ones,

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which, by the way, aren't all that strong. To accomplish this, the board has been telling the surviving, dominant S&Ls in these mergers that it will make good any losses arising from the merger. The hope is that in this way the insurance payments can be stretched out over a long enough period to make it possible to handle them without asking for money that could add substantially to the budget deficit. The board is also trying to save some S&Ls by creative bookkeeping. By redefining, recalculating on a different basis, and inventing fictitious assets to be inscribed on the ledgers, it is possible to make a dying thrift look like a healthy institution.

In another financial Heimlich Maneuver, starting May 1 the feds will let the thrifts sell three-month saving certificates (minimum deposit $7,500) that will pay a quarter of a percent more interest than a regular bank passbook account. That's a good way to encourage people to raid their own savings accounts, but it's not likely to put the thrifts in the same league as the high-rolling money market funds. After a while the hard numbers catch up. But in this situation, where we may actually see an industry disappear before our eyes, time gained is money saved.

Humane and knowledgeable people believe the thrifts may have outlived their usefulness, but at this moment, when the world economy seems to have sipped from the bottle labeled LITTLE, the crash of thrifts is unwelcome. Even the big commercial banks have their problems in the form of tens of billions of dollars in credit to countries, Communist (like Poland) and non-Communist (like Brazil), that can't pay.

NOT TOO FAR away are the dizzying consequences of the drop in the price of oil. As the revenues, but not the expenses, of the Arab oil powers decline, they are going to have to withdraw their savings by cashing in their enormous certificates of deposit in the major banks of the world. That might precipitate what is genteelly called a liquidity crisis, meaning that even the big guys would be running out of cash money. It might also mean a further decline in oil prices, which could be so painful that some of our largest corporations might begin buying fewer tickets to Reagan fundraisers. Organizations like U.S. Steel have mousetrapped themselves in a manner familiar to middle-class types who put the nest egg into real estate instead of the bank.

U.S. Steel went out and bought the Marathon Oil Company at a price of about $6.2 billion. The underlying theory for the purchase was similar to buying a house you can't quite afford: money in the bank depreciates, while oil in the ground, like a house on it, never will. The U.S. Steelers came up with the down payment, but they had to borrow the remainder like everybody else. The estimated interest on the loan will be a little short of half a billion bucks a year. If the oil business goes into a tailspin, there will be no difference between U.S. Steel and the dentist who overextended himself by speculating on condos.

U.S. Steel isn't the only corporation that got suckered into buying at the top of a market which was about to swoon. So did the Canadian liquor company, Hiram Walker. They recently fessed up that they'd paid about $145 million more than they should for oil properties. DuPont, called a genius last summer for buying Conoco Oil, is looking less brainy now that gasoline is dipping below a dollar a gallon in some places.

But woe is not confined to companies who guessed wrong on the big deal. Trouble has come to places that have never known it. At Polaroid they've been laying off 10 percent of their personnel—people with no dirt under their fingernails. And that hippest of hip, Levi Strauss & Co., has hit rough water and dipping profits, as have such standouts as CBS and even mighty Exxon. Exxon's revenues declined one entire percentage point last year.

Not to worry, though, about the likes of Mr. Double-X. He'll get along. The banquet that's being prepared is for those with less name recognition, for people who live in homes they don't own, for Reagan voters who work at small desks in tall buildings.

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

A plundering colonizer relives its past.

CRUSHING THE AFGHANS

EVER SINCE Soviet troops rolled into Afghanistan in December 1979, the Soviet press has done its utmost to mask the fact that a war of great, and potentially tragic, proportions rages throughout the country. Soviet correspondents and commentators routinely report that the masses support the "legitimate" government of Babrak Karmal, that peasants enthusiastically join together to form Soviet-style collective farms. The reports suggest that everything would be calm were it not for "terrorist bands" of "counterrevolutionaries" armed and supported by the Americans and Chinese. The Soviet press is replete with pictures of smiling Afghan peasants fraternizing with Soviet soldiers, and there are frequent interviews with Afghan citizens who praise the Soviet Union for its "selfless assistance" in securing the gains of Afghanistan's socialist revolution.

Recently, however, a new and ominous note has crept into Soviet press accounts of Afghanistan. Suddenly the *basmachi* are back in Soviet headlines. *Pravda*, which weighs its words on the precise scales of ide-

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ology, uncovered the *basmachi* late last fall, more than three months before reports of the addition of 10,000 Soviet troops to the invasion force in Afghanistan, already numbered at around 85,000. But when the *basmachi* surfaced, it should have been clear that Red Army reinforcements would not be far behind. "*Basmachi*" is a Turkish word which means "attackers," but *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* defines them as "agents of a class warfare being waged against masses by feudal barons and mullahs" to retard the "inevitable triumph of socialism." Once *Pravda* positively identified the enemy in Afghanistan, all means necessary to crush it became justified.

The first *basmachi* fought Soviet forces in Central Asia more than sixty years ago. The Soviets secured Communist rule in the deserts of what was then Turkestan by brutal suppression of the *basmachi*. Since their defeat, they have been depicted inside the Soviet Union as merciless bandits masquerading as Moslem nationalists who are actually armed and controlled by English imperialists bent on undoing the Russian Revolution. The propaganda has been effective. The average Soviet—especially the average Russian—accepts the image of the *basmachi* as semibarbaric pawns of foreign reactionaries. Linking that specter from the past to the contemporary struggle in Afghanistan, the *Pravda* headline-writers forecast the future as well. It is typical of Soviet foreign policy that once a problem can be defined in terms of ideologically sanctioned historical images, historically tried and proven remedies logically follow. Thus, since the Soviet press now deliberately leads its readers along the paths of historical parallels, it is worth a closer look at just how Moscow dealt with Central Asian resistance and the *basmachi* more than half a century ago. The portents for Afghanistan are grim.

THERE ARE TWO irreconcilable pictures of how Central Asia was brought into the Soviet orbit. Soviet sources stress the voluntary nature of the annexation of Central Asian territories, and depict the process as an exercise in self-determination based on a fundamental coincidence of the interests of an oppressed ex-colonial people and the Russian proletariat. Western specialists, by contrast, have emphasized the use of force and violence in the Sovietization of Central Asia, the control of positions of greatest political and economic power by Russians in this area, and the Great Russian chauvinism of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

One account of how the Soviet Union dealt with the Central Asian situation helps to clarify these contradictory accounts, and to underscore the tactical (if not strategic) significance of recent Soviet usage of the term "*basmachi*" as applied to the Afghan resistance movement. The source certainly cannot be accused of anti-Soviet bias, since it was the official organ (*Nationalities*) of the Commissariat of Nationalities of the Soviet government. Between 1919 and 1921 the group was headed by Stalin himself. A recently unearthed article in this newspaper, "The Basmachi Front," written in 1920 and signed "V. K.," clearly was written by Valerian Kuibyshev. He was then one of a Soviet troika of plenipotentiaries on the Central Asian front, and in the 1930s became a prominent member of the Soviet leadership and a close colleague of Stalin. The author described a situation which has clear parallels with Afghanistan today.

ACCORDING TO the author, the economic policy of the new Soviet-supported Central Asian authorities ignored the economic and social peculiarities of the region and wreaked havoc instead of building socialism. Their actions provided a fertile ground for widespread hostility on the part of the native population. In this setting, it was easy and natural for "robber bands" to arise in the name of resistance to Soviet rule, especially given the arbitrary confiscations and requisitions. The use of Red Guard detachments (of Soviet soldiers) inflamed the situation, for the absence of adequate supply facilities and of extended lines of communication, and the unfamiliar terrain, gave rise to further depredations against the native population. In Kuibyshev's words, Moscow's approach resembled nothing so much as the "attitude of plundering colonizers accustomed to looking down on the native population 'like cattle!' " Kuibyshev also confirmed that "totally unjustified mass exterminations of the local population, unfortunately, took place in this struggle."

The trading bourgeoisie threw its weight behind the fledgling *basmachi* movement, adding to it the ideology of pan-Islamism and posing as the patriotic defenders of an oppressed native populace. The result, Kuibyshev concluded, was to turn a class struggle into a national war of liberation, which, in turn, required additional men and materiel from the Soviet Union. Recent reports of Soviet troop build-ups in Afghanistan, the establishment of long-term bases, and the use of air sorties from the Soviet Union suggest a 1980s equivalent.

Sixty years later, the Soviets have altered the justification for the policy only slightly to fit the Afghan circumstances, and they now have a vastly greater force available to implement it. The freedom fighters in Afghanistan are no more *basmachi* than were the

COMING:

The conversion of

Susan Sontag.

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Central Asians in the 1920s. But in their numbers and the staunchness of their resistance, they pose the same obstacle to quick Soviet conquest as the natives of Central Asia did in the 1920s. Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin are only perpetuating an old policy with new bloodshed.

More than a century has passed since Marx prophesied that history repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce. Events in Afghanistan today, like those in Central Asia in the 1920s, suggest that for the peoples of Central Asia that tragedy comes twice.

BORIS RUMER

Boris Rumer is a research associate at the Russian Research Center at Harvard University. He is working on a book on investment policy in Soviet regional industrial development.

A Democratic comeback?

SENATE MORNING LINE

SOMETHING DRAMATIC has happened to the politics of Senate campaigns since the 1978 and 1980 elections. Those were bad elections for Democrats—the first a small step backward (a loss of three seats), the second a panicky surrender of Senate control (a loss of twelve). Now circumstances have changed to the advantage of the Democrats. To begin with, liberals are no longer automatically vulnerable. In 1980 George McGovern of South Dakota, Birch Bayh of Indiana, and John Culver of Iowa knew painfully well that they were in trouble. But their liberal counterparts seeking reelection this year—Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, Donald Riegle of Michigan, and Paul Sarbanes of Maryland—don't appear predestined to lose. "It's clear that if Metzenbaum and Riegle had run in 1980, they wouldn't be in the Senate," insists Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. "Sarbanes might be, but he would have had great difficulty." This year, each is a strong favorite.

Another change is that Western Democrats aren't the easy pickings they had been for Republican challengers of every ideological stripe. In 1978 Floyd Haskell of Colorado was thrashed by a conservative, William Armstrong. In 1980 Frank Church of Idaho lost to a new right hero, Steven Symms, and Warren Magnuson of Washington was retired by a moderate, Slade Gorton. Western Democrats running this year—for example, Henry Jackson of Washington, John Melcher of Montana, and Dennis DeConcini of Arizona—face much less formidable threats. Republicans have all but abandoned hope of even recruiting credible opponents against Jackson or Melcher, let alone ousting them. They have a shot only at DeConcini.

Still another change involves incumbents: the public revulsion to them has ebbed considerably. "The anger is almost gone," says Ornstein. "The catharsis has taken place. You don't have that strong anti-incumbent feeling." From 1970 to 1974, notes Democratic pollster Peter Hart, incumbents in competitive contests (where the winner got less than 60 percent of the vote) were reelected in nearly 75 percent of the races. From 1976 to 1980, the reelection rate for incumbents dropped to less than 40 percent. "There's a potentiality that 1982 will be the best incumbents' year since 1968," says Hart.

That would help Democrats. As a White House political strategist puts it, "they've got to put their dogs in more fights than we do." Twenty-one Democratic seats are at stake (including that of Independent Harry Byrd Jr. of Virginia, who caucuses with Democrats), compared to only twelve Republican seats. The simple mathematics of the election makes it unlikely that Democrats will recapture the Senate, now in Republican hands 53 to 47. "Realistically, we can hope to break even," says a Democratic strategist. "But the best estimate is a slim net loss, a seat or two. Within the realm of possibility is winning one or two seats. Just to break even, though, we'd have to do as well as the Republicans did in 1980, a big year for them." Republican candidates for the Senate took twenty-two of thirty-four races in 1980—65 percent. Democrats could match this by holding twenty-one of the thirty-three seats this year—64 percent. To regain control, they would need twenty-five of the thirty-three seats—76 percent. Those are long odds for the Democrats. Nonetheless, Robert Byrd, the Senate Democratic chief, muses aloud about being majority leader again. "A year ago, it seemed inconceivable that the Democrats could regain control of the Senate," he says. "Today, despite the fact that Democrats have more Senate seats at risk and less money, I am cautiously optimistic about our chances."

Republican dreams of Senate gains, once grandiose, are now modest. The party professionals tend to agree with Democratic assessments of a small Republican pickup. "We'll still add seats—two, maybe three," says Vince Breglio, the director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee. If the economy rebounds strongly, "and that's communicable to the electorate, we'll get four or five." What Republicans no longer expect are enough victories, in the phrase oft-repeated during last year's Republican Shangri-la, "to lock up the Senate for the rest of the decade." The Democrats did that in 1958, when they won fifteen seats with the aid of a recession. Actually they locked up the Senate for two decades, leaping in one election from a narrow Senate majority (49 to 47) to an overwhelming one (64 to 34). At best, the Republicans might

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move from a narrow to a comfortable majority.

But that will happen only if the Republicans surprise everyone and work out all their problems, of which they have no shortage. The most obvious is that they are in power; this alone gets Democrats off the defensive. Then there is the recession. Whether or not the Republicans are economically responsible for it, politically they are stuck with it. And it hurts, especially in creating the sinking feeling among Republicans that 1982 is not their year. This apprehension is not to be taken lightly, as it seems to have caused a candidate problem for the party. In state after state, the best Republican candidates, those who would make a Democratic senator instantly vulnerable, are balking. In Michigan, Governor William Milliken is retiring, not challenging Riegle. In Ohio, Governor James Rhodes is doing the same, not running against Metzenbaum. In Florida, Representative Bill Young of St. Petersburg declined to challenge Lawton Chiles. In Mississippi, Representative Trent Lott, the House Republican whip, refused to run against 80-year-old John Stennis. In Texas, Republicans failed to recruit any of their top three choices to face Lloyd Bentsen—Democratic Representative Phil Gramm, ex-football star Roger Staubach, or James Baker, the White House chief of staff.

ON THE OTHER hand, the Republican Party brings formidable financial and technical resources to all thirty-three Senate races. The National Republican Senatorial Committee will inject nearly $10 million into the campaign, giving the maximum to each Republican candidate. Its Democratic counterpart will be lucky if it can pump in $3 million. Moreover, the Republicans run effective candidate schools and offer sophisticated targeting and media assistance. The Democrats cannot match this. And pollster Hart warns that Democrats shouldn't airily dismiss no-name Republican candidates. With lavish spending for TV commercials, name recognition can be bought. "Remember, the Wallops and Hatches and John Easts were nobodies until they became U.S. Senators," he says.

The early line on the thirty-three races looks like this:

Vulnerable (four Democratic seats, two Republican): Probably the brightest prospect for a Republican pickup is in Maine, where George Mitchell was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Edmund Muskie. Representative David Emery, a young moderate Republican, scared off the state's other Republican House member, Olympia Snowe, and a heart attack kept former Governor Ken Curtis from challenging Mitchell in the Democratic primary. So it's Emery versus Mitchell, with Emery's once-sizable lead shrinking as the economy plummets. In New Jersey, Representative Millicent Fenwick, the model for Garry Trudeau's Lacey Davenport, has scored impressively in the polls, but she faces a tough primary fight with Jeffrey Bell, the supply-side publicist who knocked off incumbent Republican Clifford Case before losing to Bill Bradley in 1978. Fenwick might be unbeatable and Bell formidable in the fight to replace Abscam-stained Democrat Harrison Williams, who resigned in March rather than suffer the humiliation of Senate explusion. The best-known Democratic candidate would be Representative James Florio, fresh from a loss in the governor's race, but he may pass.

REPUBLICANS ARE also optimistic about capturing Harry Byrd's seat in Virginia. Representative Paul Trible, a young conservative, had his eye on the race well before Byrd announced his retirement. The forces of Democratic Governor Charles Robb are pushing a little-known state legislator, Owen Pickett, as the Democratic candidate. They have pressured Andrew Miller, the former state attorney general, not to run. Miller bears the stigma of having lost to Republican John Warner in the 1978 Senate contest. Democrat Howard Cannon of Nevada is also imperiled, but mostly because of a primary challenge by conservative Representative James Santini. Republicans are pulling for Cannon in the primary, judging that he'd be easier to beat.

The vulnerable Republican seats belong to Lowell Weicker of Connecticut and S. I. Hayakawa of California. Weicker, an unpredictable maverick, has Prescott Bush, George's brother, standing in the way of his renomination. He'll have to decide by at least a week before the September primary whether to contest the nomination or run as an independent. In either case, liberal Democrat Toby Moffett is favored. In California, Hayakawa, his mind concentrated by the prospect of certain defeat, decided to retire. A new poll shows all three of the leading Republican contenders—Rep-

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resentatives Barry Goldwater Jr. and Pete McCloskey, and San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson—with strong leads over Democratic Governor Jerry Brown. But Brown is a canny, resourceful politician. His biggest fear is that Wilson, a moderate, will win the Republican nomination.

Shaky (four Democratic seats, three Republican): Democratic leader Byrd didn't have Republican opposition in 1976. Now he's been thrown into a tizzy by Republican Representative Cleve Benedict, a Proctor & Gamble heir with plenty of money to spend. Byrd, alarmed, hired David Garth and Peter Hart. He is worried that a media effort by the National Conservative Political Action Committee will hurt by linking him to liberal causes unpopular in West Virginia. The ingredients for trouble are there for Byrd, but they are still only ingredients; they haven't jelled yet.

Ed Zorinsky of Nebraska flirted with returning to the Republican Party, but is running again as a Democrat. Republicans predict that their campaign for James Keck, a former vice commander of the Strategic Air Command, will be extraordinarily well run. If so, Keck has a shot in this very Republican state. DeConcini of Arizona, like Zorinsky, is a Democrat running in a traditionally Republican state. James Sasser of Tennessee would be in more trouble if Representative Robin Beard, the hawkish Republican, had gotten his campaign off to a smoother start. As it stands, Beard has a long road to travel to ease past Sasser.

The shaky Republican seats are held by Orrin Hatch of Utah, Harrison Schmitt of New Mexico, and John Chafee of Rhode Island. Hatch goes against a moderate Democrat, Mayor Ted Wilson of Salt Lake City. He leads by less than 10 percentage points in newspaper polls. He and Schmitt, the Republicans' man in the moon, have been targeted by Propac, a liberal imitation of NCPAC. Schmitt has other problems as well, notably that New Mexico has a strong Democratic Party. He may fall. Chafee remains popular, but some Democrats believe he can be upset if his ties to President Reagan become the issue in heavily Democratic Rhode Island.

Solid, but not yet safe (nine Democratic seats, four Republican): Stennis's age might jeopardize his reelection, Republicans feel. Quentin Burdick of North Dakota and Paul Sarbanes of Maryland are too liberal for their states, they argue. Sarbanes, who doesn't send out press releases, has a weak image and may be damaged by NCPAC's blunt ads. "He voted for forced school busing, yet sends his son to a private school," one TV spot says. "Paul Sarbanes is too liberal for Maryland."

Yet the Republican Party's hopes for gains among this group of Democrats are fading. NCPAC earlier went after Melcher of Montana, but found that the ads didn't even nick his high standing. Daniel Patrick Moynihan has largely foiled NCPAC's attacks in New York, while skillfully changing his image from neoconservative to neoliberal. He is looking more solid all the time. His only possible problem is the early demise of former Representative Bruce Caputo, the Republican candidate who dropped out when caught fibbing about his nonexistent Army background. Moynihan wanted this shoe to drop next fall, when it would be too late for Republicans to find a strong replacement for Caputo. Don Riegle of Michigan and Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio have soared as the recession has deepened, casting a cloud over Republicans in their states. Bentsen of Texas and Chiles of Florida have unimpressive opposition.

Among Republicans, Wyoming's Malcolm Wallop would be the underdog if Democratic Governor Ed Herschler were to challenge him. Since that is unlikely, Wallop is strong. Like John Chafee, Robert Stafford of Vermont might be threatened if an anti-Republican tide swept the Northeast. But Stafford, as an environmentalist, has put some distance between himself and the President, and Vermont is a Republican state. Stafford may have primary trouble, though, as John McClaughery, a populist conservative, has quit his White House job to oppose the Senator. William Roth of Delaware, the Roth of Kemp-Roth, would also be endangered in any national Democratic sweep. David Durenberger of Minnesota has a well-financed foe in Mark Dayton, a department store heir who is married to a Rockefeller. Dayton has hired Garth, and must overcome a primary challenge from former Senator Eugene McCarthy, seeking a comeback at age 66. Durenberger's grip on the state is not to be confused with that of a Hubert Humphrey or a Walter Mondale. Still, a Democratic upset seems improbable.

Invulnerable (four Democrats, three Republicans): Who is the Republican running against Henry Jackson of Washington? "Nobody prominent," grumbles a Republican official. Nor is anyone with even a remote chance of winning pitted against William Proxmire of Wisconsin, Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii, or Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. But Republican strategists hope that Dr. Mildred Jefferson wins the Republican nomination to face Kennedy. "He'll be tied in knots running against a black woman," argues one Republican. John Heinz of Pennsylvania and John Danforth of Missouri are blessed with the same circumstances as Jackson, Proxmire, Matsunaga, and Kennedy: nobody worth mentioning is running against them. Richard Lugar of Indiana had this luxury until Representative Floyd Fithian, squeezed out of his House seat by reapportionment, declared for the Democratic nomination. A strong Fithian campaign, capitalizing on Indiana's 13.6 percent unemployment, could drive Lugar from the ranks of the invulnerable.

FRED BARNES

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Between Dr. New Deal and Dr. Win-the-War was Dr. Stalemate.

THE FORGOTTEN FDR

BY JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS AND MICHAEL R. BESCHLOSS

THE BANQUET DISHES have been cleared away, the orations ended, the television screen turned back to "Dallas" and basketball. Franklin Roosevelt's centenary is adjourned.

Birthday celebrations are occasions for tribute, and this one suffered no shortage of acclamation for the brilliant feats of Dr. New Deal and Dr. Win-the-War. One Roosevelt, however, was little mentioned. This was the Roosevelt of the second term, a frustrated man, a President whose domestic program and foreign initiatives were largely stymied by a fragmented political system. Had this Roosevelt left the White House before 1941, he might well have fallen below the first rank of Presidential greatness. No one likes to spoil a party by recalling the hero's lesser moments, but how do we account for the second-term Roosevelt? At a time when we lament the inadequacy of contemporary American leadership and institutions, it is instructive to take a closer look at Dr. Stalemate.

On the eve of his first reelection in November 1936, the President seemed omnipotent. The tumultuous crowd in Madison Square Garden egged on the candidate as he taunted the bankers, monopolists, speculators, and economic royalists. As usual, he attacked his Republican foes' most vulnerable allies rather than the Republican Party itself. "Never before in all our history have these forces been so united against one candidate as they stand today. They are unanimous in their hate for me—*and I welcome their hatred!*" Then, his voice rising: "I should like to have it said of my first Administration that in it the forces of selfishness and of lust for power met their *match*. I should like to have it said of my second Administration that in it the forces of selfishness and of lust for power met their *master*!"

Emboldened by the greatest Presidential reendorsement in history, Roosevelt became even more defiant. The second term began with a call to aid the "one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." In 1934 and 1936, he had received imposing mandates. But translating those mandates into policy required the assent of the "nine old men" of the Supreme Court who had begun repealing New Deal programs as unconstitutional. Two weeks after the inaugural, the President sent Congress his proposal to reform the Court. For every Justice who failed to quit the bench within six months after reaching the age of seventy, the President would be authorized to appoint a new member, up to a total of six.

The scheme has received a bad press from most historians, partly because it failed. Yet it had a certain logic as a device—if a transparent one—to enforce the will of the American majority. The Court's obstructionism had thrown Roosevelt into a Jeffersonian mood, preaching majority rule and popular rights while planning a memorial to the third President across the Tidal Basin. But in the message to Congress on Court reorganization, he committed a major tactical mistake, citing not the rights of the majority but judicial delay and inefficiency. Majority rule was difficult to oppose, but Chief Justice Hughes could easily refute charges of congestion in the courts. Roosevelt's plea for efficiency missed the principle of the matter. It was, as a friendly newspaper said, "too clever—too damned clever."

The counterattack began. As conservative Democrats, editors, business leaders, and Republicans marshaled forces against the Court plan, the President trumpeted once again the doctrine of majority rule. Not only did the electorates of the past four years demand that "we meet the people's needs now," he reminded fellow Democrats, but the Democracy would gain no future majorities if it did not. "If we do not have the courage to lead the American people where they want to go, someone else will." But it was too late to return to principle. When the Court surprised the nation by affirming the constitutionality of the Wagner Act—the "switch in time that saved nine"—the defeat of the Court bill was assured.

By this time—late 1937—Roosevelt was as deeply in trouble with Congress as he had been with the Supreme Court. He had postponed his legislative agenda of wages and hours reform, executive reorganization, a comprehensive farm program, additional versions of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and low-cost housing in order to give Court reform a better chance on the Hill. Now the blood was on the water and all of the other bills were endangered. Most of them failed to

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make their way through the legislative labyrinth, or were eviscerated.

By the middle of 1938, Congress was in full rebellion, spurred by the President's Congressional defeats and the outbreak of what would be called the "Roosevelt recession." If Roosevelt had promised Americans anything, it was jobs, and now the bread lines were lengthening again. His economic policy had fallen into disarray. Caught between his instinct to meet the needs of his constituency and his fear of a continued budget deficit, the President groped for a way out.

THE WAY HE chose was the boldest gamble of his political career. "Charged with the responsibility of the definitely liberal declaration of principles set forth in the 1936 Democratic platform," Roosevelt declared in a fireside chat, "I feel that I have every right to speak on the few issues where there may be a clear issue between candidates for the Democratic nomination involving these principles, or involving a clear misuse of my own name." Then came his attempt to purge Congressional conservatives from the Democratic Party. This time, the President wore the Jefferson majoritarian hat from the start, but, once again, the gamble failed. Every legislator Roosevelt opposed was renominated; the only exception was John O'Connor, chairman of the House Rules Committee, against whom the President's operatives in Manhattan waged a special struggle. Elsewhere, as Democratic chairman James Farley had predicted, the purge was "a bust."

January 1939 found Roosevelt's domestic program deadlocked in Congress, and his legislative opponents on the offensive. The Dies Committee began searching for Communists under New Deal hedges; the Smith Committee investigated the National Labor Relations Board; other panels examined ways to undermine other Presidential programs. Assailed on all sides, Franklin Roosevelt had to summon from his personal resources the authority to cope with the dangers aborning in Europe and the Far East.

Most of the voters who reelected him in 1936 were resolutely opposed to intervention in Europe. Italy's conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 had provoked Congress to tie the President's hands with a neutrality law forbidding him from aiding one side of a conflict over the other. Roosevelt warned that by hampering our ability to restrain potential threats to the hemisphere the law might actually pull America into war—but he grudgingly signed it. Suspicion of the foreign policy leadership was sufficiently widespread that three-quarters of Americans surveyed in 1937 supported the Ludlow Amendment to remove the war-making power from both President *and* Congress, in favor of a national plebiscite. The bill failed by one vote.

Under Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt had once seen intervention in Europe without a national consensus and the disillusionment that followed. Attempting to bulldoze the nation into war once again would only further weaken his leadership and steel the isolationists. The President resolved to speak against international adventurism while slowly awakening Americans to the threat from overseas. In this Roosevelt was almost alone among the highest levels of American leadership at the outset of the second term.

It was Roosevelt's ability to improvise interventionist measures and postures while remaining sensitive to the needs of democratic consent and Presidential accountability—along with Hitler's aggressions—that enabled him to move the electorate toward siding with Britain against Hitler in 1940. This leadership of exquisite ambiguity was dependent on the foresight and cleverness of a single man.

The constraints on Roosevelt's flexibility in domestic affairs during the second term were, in foreign affairs, a straitjacket. The radio priest, Father Coughlin, could unleash millions of letters and millions of dollars against Presidential involvement in Europe. Charles Lindbergh, publishers such as McCormick, the Pattersons, and Hearst, and other isolationist and pacifist leaders held equally powerful sway over Congressional leaders and public opinion.

OTHER OBSTACLES were at least partly of the President's own making. The 1936 New Deal coalition was constructed largely by pursuing voters as members of ethnic blocs. During the Italian-Ethiopian conflict, Roosevelt had been wary of offending Italian or negro leaders. (The editorials in negro newspapers supporting the Ethiopian cause were the forerunner of modern links between American blacks and the third world.) He worried about the Catholic leadership's backing of the embargo against supplies to Spain. And then there were threats from the Irish to desert Roosevelt in 1940 if he strayed from isolationism.

The President looked for allies. He found the Democratic Party no more reliable in foreign policy than in domestic affairs: on one occasion, in 1939, when he asked the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a revised neutrality law, he received eighteen bills from the eighteen Democratic and Republican members. Nor was Roosevelt's own executive branch an effective instrument. Not a single member of the White House secretariat or the Cabinet had substantial foreign affairs experience, with the possible exception of Cordell Hull, the Tennessee Senator who was appointed Secretary of State primarily to serve as a conduit to Congress.

The battleground of U.S. foreign policy in the late 1930s was not the White House but Capitol Hill. It was the summer solstice of Congressional power over foreign affairs. Some of the lords of the Hill were determined to checkmate Roosevelt in foreign policy. Part of this was Congress's growing allergy to Roosevelt; part was the memory of Wilson as a lesson in what Presidents might do if unrestrained. This determination was matched, almost without exception, by un-

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yielding ignorance and indifference toward world events.

Roosevelt was reluctant to spend his coin with Congress on foreign policy: better, he said, to enact his domestic program first, since economic security was essential to democratic freedoms. Still, he had an unexpected weapon, presented by none other than the Supreme Court. In *U.S.* v. *Curtiss-Wright* (1936) and *U.S.* v. *Belmont* (1937), the Court had ruled the President's foreign policy powers inherently greater than his domestic powers and affirmed the constitutionality of executive agreements. But Roosevelt was eager to disarm opponents and unify the nation—not to test the Court's ruling by waving a red cape before Congress. The weapon remained largely unused.

Roosevelt had little choice but patience. In the famous Chicago speech of October 1937, he proposed the quarantine of aggressor nations, but even this toothless and ambiguous suggestion provoked accusations that the President was lurching toward war. "It's a terrible thing," he said privately, "to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and to find no one there." When Japanese warplanes destroyed the American gunboat Panay, he dared not propose a boycott or blockade.

Roosevelt emerged from 1938 an apparent lame duck with a shrinking Congressional base. Only when Europe went to war in September 1939 did he gain a fair chance at revising the neutrality law. Once again he demonstrated his mastery both at facing up to a crisis and exploiting it politically. He proposed revision—but based it on the ground of keeping America out of war. Recruiting Republicans such as Landon, Stimson, and Knox to aid the campaign, Roosevelt made an ostentatious show of peaceful intentions; he slashed defense chiefs' requests for Army and National Guard expansion by 50 percent. "I am almost literally walking on eggs . . . ," he wrote to Lord Tweedsmuir, "saying nothing, seeing nothing and hearing nothing." These tactics and the bulletins from Europe finally carried revision through Congress.

The supreme test of Roosevelt's crisis leadership came in 1940. By summer, the Nazis were running Europe and threatening Britain. Roosevelt entered a third-term campaign against a moneyed coalition of Republicans, isolationists, ex-New Dealers, big-businessmen, and—so certain reports informed the White House—a few Fifth Columnists. ("We seem to have avoided a *Putsch*," said the President to Joseph Lash after the voting.) The third term was itself a moral issue for Americans increasingly fearful of "dictatorship." Wendell Willkie's audiences swelled when he started to accuse Roosevelt of one-man rule and secret intrigues to carry the nation to war.

The President wanted to help Britain without frightening the voters or Congress, and strengthen national defense without jeopardizing his reelection. When Churchill and the King asked as "a matter of life or death" for some over-age American destroyers, Roosevelt said that Congress was "in no mood at the present time to allow any form of sale." But Britain was in mortal peril. The President agreed to trade the ships for British military bases—but only after unsheathing the weapons of *Curtiss-Wright* and *Belmont* and clearing the trade by executive agreement with his Attorney General. The destroyer deal was unveiled to the public as a "good horsetrade" and the biggest boost to national defense since the Louisiana Purchase. Roosevelt considered resumption of the draft a similar necessity and moved it through Congress over the protests of the isolationists.

ROOSEVELT steered his way through all of these shoals with skill. In other respects his leadership during this period was less impressive. The centerpiece of his foreign policy strategy was a contradiction. Publicly he represented aid to Britain purely as a safeguard against American involvement, but privately he knew (and doubtless hoped) that such unneutral actions could bring us into the fighting. Like his defense of Court-packing for reasons of efficiency, this contradiction undermined Roosevelt's credibility; it gave precedents to later Presidents for deceiving the public during less threatening international crises. Still, few other American leaders were willing to brook the consequences of such unpopular policies in a stupendous national emergency—especially in an election year.

Roosevelt's collaboration with Britain was not only deceptively presented but dangerous: a single breach of secrecy would have fueled the rumors of secret Anglo-American arrangements and destroyed the President's fragile consensus. His harassment of Lindbergh and other domestic opponents—the mail openings, buggings, and other forms of surveillance—seem in retrospect to have contributed little to national security and compromised his rhetorical commitment to civil liberties. The manipulative aspect of Roosevelt's statecraft culminated in a proposal that was also a masterstroke: Lend-Lease, in January 1941. Administration witnesses defended the bill as an alternative to war while, back at the White House, the President hoped for an impressive victory he could cite as a Congressional mandate for increasing intervention in Europe; he accepted restrictions and amendments to the act in order to gain the strongest possible vote for the crucial measure.

When Congress granted Lend-Lease overwhelming approval, Roosevelt's leadership strategy changed dramatically. For four years, he had consulted Congressional leaders at almost every juncture in foreign policy, and often retreated when they disapproved. Now, as the great constitutionalist E. S. Corwin wrote, the President staked out the course of Congress with a series of *faits accomplis*. Among these were his orders to the Navy on convoys in the North Atlantic and his

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dispatch of troops to Iceland. He declared that Congress had made it "perfectly clear" that American defense involved trying to "help, in every way we can, those people who are conducting active war against this attempted domination."

Still, Congress was not ready to roll over and play dead. When the Administration submitted military conscription to Congress for renewal, the House approved by a single vote. Surveys showed persistent public opposition to intervention. Without the intercession of Japanese bombers on December 7, 1941, an historic confrontation might have pitted a President taking unneutral steps—each more venturesome than the last—against a Congress and electorate opposed to European involvement. Roosevelt told Henry Morgenthau in the spring of 1941 that he was "waiting to be pushed" by an incident. Did he deliberately provoke Pearl Harbor, as the anti-Roosevelt diehards and more recent scholars have attested?

He did not, but the question misses the point. The significance of Pearl Harbor for Presidential leadership today is that the decision of a foreign government to make war was required to persuade the American Congress and citizenry to enter the conflict. So unwilling were Congress and the public to face up to the dangers, so limited was Roosevelt's influence in foreign policy—even at its high point on the eve of Pearl Harbor—that the only route to intervention in Europe was a surprise attack by Japan. Only on the day of infamy did Franklin Roosevelt's triumphant third-term war leadership really begin.

WHAT LAY BEHIND the failures of the second term? They resulted in part from the defects of Roosevelt's political virtues. His Presidential leadership was largely a personal one. He had put through his first-term programs by building a loose coalition of Democrats and liberal Republicans. As a leader of Congress, he had exploited his personal relations with the mandarins rather than build ties with the rank-and-file membership. In 1936, he had campaigned not only as a Democrat but as a "President of all the people" rising above party and group.

Then, in attacking judicial obstructionists in 1937 and Congressional and party foes in 1938 and 1939, he shifted his strategy and tried to mobilize his party as an engine of liberalism. He had prepared the way intellectually—by appealing to the majoritarian doctrine of Jefferson—but not strategically. He had strengthened party organization neither in Congress nor at the grass roots.

The greater problem, however, was the system through which Roosevelt was trying to exert leadership—the edifice of fragmented and dispersed powers so craftily devised by the framers of the Constitution. Roosevelt mistakenly felt that he could continue indefinitely to bridge—through personal leadership, improvisation, management, manipulation—the power fissures deep in the system. Hence his failure during the second term was not simply a series of personal frustrations but the encounter of a leader with an anti-leadership system.

Ironically, it was the rise of Hitlerism that ultimately changed Roosevelt's political fortunes and Presidential leadership, altering political coalitions, alignments, calculations. The Supreme Court he had battled strengthened his power in foreign policy. Senators he had tried to purge finally came to his support on foreign relations. The coalition of Democrats and liberal Republicans that had faltered for most of the second term finally materialized in the coalition that supported Lend-Lease in 1941.

During these tempestuous years, Roosevelt could watch from his study window as the Jefferson Memorial slowly rose across the Tidal Basin. "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions," the Virginian once said, as one wall of the monument records. "But laws and institutions must go hand and hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. . . ."

THE ROOSEVELT CENTENARY is over, but the legacy both of accomplishment and improvisation remain as part of the imperial Presidency. That legacy is towering—the permanent New Deal written into scores of acts and historic actions, and, perhaps most important, the attitudes of Americans toward the use of the federal government to meet human needs and aspirations. Roosevelt's audacity, his exuberance and resourcefulness and superb political skills, merit the glowing birthday tributes. Going back to his private correspondence and conversations as well as his public actions and statements recalls, above all, his commitment and tenacity in pressing for the kind of nation and world in which he believed.

But all of this simply sharpens the supreme paradox. It was no political bumbler, or a man lacking a mandate or a sense of commitment, who ran afoul of the system. It was this man of consummate self-confidence and competence. As the next century brings problems more intractable, crises even more awesome, how can lesser men and women fare?

This year marks another anniversary, the 250th birthday of George Washington. The greatest of the leaders who presided over the writing of the Constitution, our first President shared responsibility—paradoxically—for the antileadership system of 1787. In five years, we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Constitution itself. Perhaps the most fitting way to honor Franklin Roosevelt in this decade is to assess once again the political system that he mastered and that, in the second term, largely mastered him.

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

the entire contents of *Breaking Ranks* should have been added to the pages of *Why We Were in Vietnam* for a complete picture of the author's political views? The fact is, Podhoretz has never hesitated to disclose either the details of his political history or the reasons why he has changed his mind on political issues. In this respect, as in others, he differs from Draper, who has never been willing to confide to his readers the actual details of his own political history. This issue is not entirely irrelevant to his review of *Why We Were in Vietnam*. Some of the hateful rhetoric he employs in this review—all this "stab in the back" stuff, for example—reads exactly like the kind of thing Draper used to turn out for the *Daily Worker*. Draper's views have certainly changed a great deal since that time—and it is to his credit that they have—but some of the habits he acquired in his Communist days have nonetheless persisted in his polemical style, and they are very much in evidence in the pernicious tone he has adopted in his review.

Agree or not with its findings, Norman Podhoretz's book addresses itself to a political calamity of the greatest magnitude. By making Podhoretz, rather than the calamity itself, the principal focus of his review, Draper has put his readers on notice that any heterodox attempt to understand the nature of this calamity will continue to be firmly resisted and punished. Which adds yet another dimension to the calamity that prompted the writing of this important book.

Hilton Kramer
Westport, Connecticut

Theodore Draper replies:

Guenter Lewy has apparently failed to read my review of Podhoretz's book carefully. He now says that neither he nor Podhoretz ever suggested "anything different" from my view of the Tonkin Gulf resolution. He agrees that Fulbright and the Senate "did not want to encourage President Johnson to wage a major land war in Vietnam."

But Podhoretz wrote that Fulbright had "pointed out that the resolution would indeed empower the President to involve the United States in a major land war in Asia." Podhoretz thus clearly suggested something very different; he obviously suggested that Fulbright and the Senate had wanted to encourage President Johnson to wage a major land war in Vietnam.

Anyone defending Podhoretz on this matter would be obliged to tell us where and when Fulbright had "pointed out" what Podhoretz attributed to him. Lewy does not and cannot tell us any such thing. Instead, he changes the subject and argues a point that I never brought up. Whether or not Johnson deceived Fulbright into supporting a previously planned escalation of the war would require an even longer and more detailed examination of the evidence than that necessary for Podhoretz's imaginary version of what Fulbright had supposedly "pointed out." The third paragraph in Lewy's letter is sheer obfuscation.

Marion Magid and Hilton Kramer do not have to remind me of *Breaking Ranks*. I referred to it in my review as "far from candid" in its treatment of Podhoretz's record on the Vietnam War. In fact, I should have been less kind. In *Breaking Ranks*, Podhoretz claimed that he had "continued to support an American withdrawal, if at all possible through a negotiated settlement." In *Commentary* of May 1971, however, he had actually supported an "American defeat" if complete American withdrawal was not forthcoming. So much for the "secret" that Podhoretz let out in *Breaking Ranks*.

No, I do not think that the entire contents of *Breaking Ranks* should have been added to *Why We Were in Vietnam*. Neither do I think that the readers of *Why We Were in Vietnam* could be expected to know what Podhoretz had written in *Breaking Ranks*. Nor do I think that the readers of *Why We Were in Vietnam* should be expected to know what was published in *Commentary* from 1965 to 1973.

I brought up Podhoretz's past views on Vietnam because he has appointed himself the scourge of every sector of the anti-Vietnam War movement from Susan Sontag to Hans Morgenthau. I said that everyone has a right to change his mind. But no one has a right to be so smug and sanctimonious, flagellating all the antiwar sinners except himself. This holier-than-thou frenzy of denunciation goes on throughout the book.

The real danger in these wholesale anathemas reaches some sort of paroxysm in Hilton Kramer's letter. It deserves special attention.

(1) *About Communism.* I said that "saving South Vietnam from Communism was never enough to justify American intervention, let alone on the scale of 1965-1972." I made this statement because Podhoretz wrote that it was "self-evident that the United States was doing the right thing to save South Vietnam from Communism." The domino theory was invoked precisely because it was not self-evident that it was enough to save South Vietnam from Communism. Podhoretz, moreover, agrees that everyone was wrong about the domino theory at the time.

(2) *About printed sources.* Can it be that Kramer does not know the difference between different types of "printed sources"? I said that Podhoretz's research is "almost exclusively research into other people's books." Kramer rejoins that my book *Abuse of Power* is "'almost exclusively' based on words already in print." He seems to think that taking snippets out of other people's books is equivalent to using documentary sources also made up of words in print. To use again the Tonkin Gulf resolution: Podhoretz based himself on Lewy's book; I based myself on the Senate debate as printed in the *Congressional Record*. It should not be too difficult to detect the difference.

(3) *About autobiographical candor.* Here we get to the pathology in Hilton Kramer's outburst. As for the *Daily Worker*, I came on as the youngest staff member forty-seven years ago and left forty-five years ago. I wrote in the *New Masses* the article that led to my break with the Communist movement forty-two years ago. I doubt whether Kramer read what I wrote for the *Daily Worker* when he was seven-to-nine years old or that he has read it recently. To say that what I wrote long ago for the *Daily Worker* "reads exactly" like some of the rhetoric in my review is reminiscent of the ethics of controversy of the late Senator McCarthy from Wisconsin. If Kramer thinks he is making some dark revelation about my youthful political depravity, he is wildly mistaken. The details of my political history have been in print, alas, for almost half a century, during which time I have written on the most difficult and contentious issues of our time, all the while envying those who deal with Kramer's habitual subjects. I could not conceal my political history if I wanted to.

Dragging in the *Daily Worker* at this late date is dirty business. I would not have expected Hilton Kramer to sink so low. No doubt he will wake up one day and regret it.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

One Man In His Time

Anyone who has seen Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) has seen Gustaf Gründgens: he plays the leader of the criminals, in bowler hat and leather coat. *Mephisto* is a Hungarian film (1981) derived from a novel of that name (1936) by Klaus Mann which is a *roman à clef* about Gründgens. Ariane Mnouchkine, the French theater director, dramatized the novel several years ago, and a translation of her play was produced in London last October.

Mephisto
(Analysis Films)

Gründgens (1899-1963) was thought by many to be the greatest German actor, director, and theater intendant (general manager and artistic director) of his time. That of course would not in itself explain the novel/play/film. Look again at "his time": it encompasses the Hitler era. Gründgens's career began before Hitler, prospered during Hitler's rule, and continued after it. His life, outside of his artistic achievements, is a marvel of navigation. Politically he began as a leftist. Before Hitler's ascent, he married Erika Mann, daughter of Thomas (and sister of Klaus!). He became head of prominent German theaters, and he swayed with the Nazi whirlwind in order to retain his eminence. His wife emigrated and they were divorced; his second wife was a very Aryan actress. He became a friend and protégé of Goering. He managed the Berlin Schauspielhaus from 1934 to 1944. He also directed and acted in films under the Nazis. He was imprisoned after the war but was "de-nazified" on the ground that he had helped keep German culture alive in a barbaric time—also he had done all he could do to help people who were being harried by the Nazis. After release by the Allies, he worked in the Deutsches Theater in *East* Berlin for a year or so, then went to West Germany to take over the major theater in Düsseldorf. He ended his career as intendant of the Hamburg Schauspielhaus where he was also leading actor and director. When Bertolt Brecht came back to Berlin—East Berlin—after the war, he offered his play *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* to Gründgens, over in the other Germany, and Gründgens did the first production in Hamburg in 1959. In 1960 a filmed record was made of one of Gründgens's most famous productions, *Faust*, with himself as Mephistopheles. Three years later he died while on holiday in the Far East, possibly a suicide, possibly because of a love affair.

I haven't read Klaus Mann's novel, which has only recently been published in Europe after delay by legal obstacles. (Added irony: Mann committed suicide in 1949, supposedly depressed because of those obstacles.) The film, like the novel, ends before the war. It claims to be based "on motifs" drawn from the book, and it implies the pattern of its protagonist's future by what we see.

Mephisto was made in Hungary, but the soundtrack here is in German. Only a few of the actors are German or Austrian; most are Hungarian, a few of other nationalities—all dubbed into German with extraordinary skill. The Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer plays Höfgen, the name here given to Gründgens. The role is so juicy—it *begins* with a tantrum—that only a desperately inadequate actor could fail in it, and Brandauer is better than adequate. He has more force than fire, more energy than magnetism, but he does well.

Rolf Hoppe, presumably German, is excellent as the Nazi prime minister. It's Goering, naturally, complete with blonde Valkyrie consort, but somewhat altered. I can't remember any newsreels of Goering moving quickly; Hoppe, who is stout, always strides rapidly, making his retinue scurry, as if to show that corpulence can't slow this leader down, that party zeal lends him wings. In repose, in close-up, Hoppe uses his fat face with an eloquence I haven't seen since Sydney Greenstreet. His quivery jowls seem themselves to cajole or threaten. It's a lithe maniacal performance within a gross body.

Krystyna Janda, the Polish actress familiar from several Wajda films, plays Höfgen's first wife with the most focused acting of hers that I've seen, confident and restrained; perhaps the dubbing into German holds it together. And Karin Boyd, a German black actress well-known, I'm told, in the theater there, is superb as Höfgen's movement teacher and also his lover. (The character had a German father; mother unspecified.) Their passionate meetings are seen first in Hamburg in his leftist days; then in Berlin, secretly, after his nazification; then in Paris after he has maneuvered an exit visa for her and he visits her for the last time. In these scenes Boyd gives us both a tiger and an intelligent, dignified woman; and, through her, we see Höfgen at both his truest and his most pathetic. Their affair brings out the deepest feeling of which he is capable and also the deepest cowardice, because he dare not

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Dinner With André. You may not believe beforehand that table-talk between an avant-garde theater director and a playwright—ranging far from the theater—could be so continuously interesting.

Passione d'Amore. Nineteenth-century Italy. A strange triangle: handsome army officer, beautiful mistress, most unbeautiful "other woman" who finally captures him. A romance that rigorously examines romanticism.

Reds. All the "exposé" of factual omission and dramatic license doesn't affect the excitement of this flawed but stirring film about John Reed and Louise Bryant. The essence remains true: American romance vs. European political hardheadedness.

Victor/Victoria. Blake Edwards directed and based his script on an old German comedy. Result: a witty, fast farce about transvestism and homosexuality in Paris, 1934.

SK

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acknowledge that feeling publicly.

Most of the other actors are Hungarian, and the assemblage of faces gives the film a marvelous texture. Together the faces compose a map of the heartland of Europe. Among the characters are a super-Nazi sculptor named Leni, shown as lesbian and an intimate of Höfgen's wives (you can draw your own inferences about Riefenstahl and other matters); a leftist actor whom Höfgen is able to protect for a while; another actor who is a fervent early Nazi but who, after Hitler takes office, loses both his faith and his life.

THE SCREENPLAY was written by the director, István Szabó, and Peter Dobai. Szabó, now 44 and accounted one of Hungary's top directors, was last represented here by *Confidence*, the story of a Budapest man and woman during the German Occupation, forced by circumstances to pose as man and wife. (Both of the actors are also in *Mephisto*.) The script left me with questions, but the making of the film was extraordinary, a nice balance of melancholy and menace.

With the same cinematographer, Lajos Koltai, Szabó has given *Mephisto* an equally appropriate, therefore utterly different, look. The subject of the film is seen as *performance*; the lighting and composition and movement are as theatrical as realism will bear. An instance: in one of Höfgen's apartments, all we see through the windows is thick white—no other buildings—as if the sky were fleecy and low. The effect renders the absolutely veristic room into a stage setting.

Light, sheerly theatrical light, is what ends the film. After Höfgen has triumphed in a Nordic, "positive" production of *Hamlet*, he is whisked off in the middle of the night by the adoring prime minister to an immense empty stadium. The minister orders the puzzled actor out into the middle of the great field where intense spotlights catch him. Apparently he is to be recruited into staging huge political rallies here. The camera closes in on him in the white and whitening light, suggesting the white makeup he has worn as Mephisto. Now, a bit frightened by what his cunning has brought him to, he gasps: "What do you people want of me? I'm only an actor." The light on his face continues to intensify until the screen goes white, and the film finishes.

Obviously *Mephisto* wants to fix a moral dilemma. An actor cannot do what any other sort of artist, even a writer, can do: practice his art at its best in a foreign country. No mature actor can hope to become as good in a second language as he is in his own, though of course (which is a different subject) many actors have been successful in second, even third languages. Quite apart from whether or not we approve of Höfgen's choice, it's easy to understand, especially since *Mephisto* ends before the war, how he can rationalize himself into acceptance of the new regime because his life is his acting—his greatness as an actor—and he can't imagine acting in another language. He declines to join a female star who emigrates early. When he journeys to Budapest to play in a film for a famous Berlin theater director, patently modeled on Max Reinhardt, the director tells him that one reason he was engaged was so that he could flee Germany with the director. Höfgen returns to Berlin.

But Höfgen's dilemma is the very reason why, at the last, the film falls short. It never becomes more than the dilemma of an actor; it never enlarges sufficiently to become a representative moral agony, to make Höfgen a protagonist for millions. That agony was great in Germany, is great today in totalitarian countries. Under such a government, all people—except those who are lucky enough to escape—fall into one of three groups: the proscribed and hopeless, which in Germany chiefly meant Jews, Communists, homosexuals, and gypsies; the heroic antagonists, who could get by if they chose but who resist, risking imprisonment and death; and the majority. Many of the majority in Germany, I'm quite willing to believe, disliked the Nazi movement but were not sufficiently heroic to resist once it took power. Are they therefore villains? All grief to the victims, all honor to the heroes, but are the others villains? I'm uneasy about judging them because I'm not so nobly certain that if I had been an "Aryan" German, nominally acceptable to the regime, I'd have resisted. I know that I'd have been anti-Nazi; I'm not so sure that I'd have been willing to be tortured and/or killed for my belief. So I'm reluctant to judge those who did not resist.

Mephisto doesn't grow to embrace "my" dilemma. Höfgen never becomes

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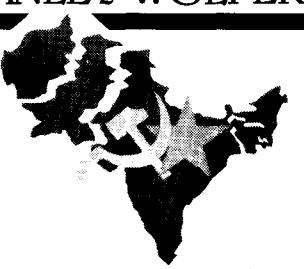

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more than a professional with a particularized professional problem. The film is vivid, well performed, sharp; but it never quite leaves the parish of the theater.

Victor/Victoria Note. I mentioned in my review a few weeks back that Blake Edwards's fine farce was based on a German film comedy made in 1933, which was then made in French, then remade in Germany in 1957. I've since learned that it was also made in Britain in 1935 as *First A Girl*, starring Jessie Matthews. So *Victor/Victoria* is the fifth version. I don't know what the first four were like, but this time they've certainly got it right.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Pinter's New Play

Pinter's new play, now receiving its American premiere by the Trinity Square Repertory Company in Providence, is actually an early play, either the second or the third in the playwright's canon. Written in 1958, *The Hothouse* sat in a trunk for twenty-four years because the author decided he didn't like the characters. The characters *are* unlikable—so, in fact, are most of Pinter's people. But these are also animated and alive and, equally important, members of a social world—an external milieu which sits palpably on stage instead of lurking in the wings like a phantom menace.

The Hothouse
by Harold Pinter

The Unseen Hand
by Sam Shepard

The Hothouse is hardly the best written of Pinter's works or the most exquisitely engineered, but it has a kind of unbuttoned, careening energy I find impossible to resist, and it suggests a road he might have taken had he not chosen to perfect the art of tergiversation. Most of Pinter's plays are not so much suggestive as evasive; his fondness for textual lacunae lays the burden of specificity on the actor. Since actors are hardly reluctant to comply, Pinter's scenes tend to move down instead of forward, tantalizing us with their ciphers and hieroglyphs. It is not to denigrate this playwright's extraordinary craftsmanship to say there may be a lot less in his work than meets the eye. Pinter admits to being amused when commentators labor over the "meaning" of his works, continuing to insist (correctly, in my view) that they mean no more than they say. The trouble is that what they say has grown increasingly precious, as if Pinter's closest pals these days were Bertie Wooster and Sebastian Flyte. His upper-class characters are so frozen and brittle that one wonders if he is satirizing their emotionlessness or actually trying to celebrate their "cool."

As its title suggests, *The Hothouse*, mercifully, is hot. Compared with Pinter's other play of this period, *The Birthday Party*, which has not aged well, it is vivid, molten, on fire. The characters are unpressed, no matter how they try to arrange themselves; they are controllers, but out of control. The scene is a mental institution, where the keepers themselves are mad. The invisible patients are identified only by numbers; there are no doctors, only a combative staff of edgy, querulous, ambitious functionaries. Nobody recovers in this institution; the only action involves the power games of the administration.

The chief bureaucrat is Roote, and in the remarkable opening scene he is learning from an underling, Gibbs, that 6457 and 6459, two patients he cannot keep straight, are in extreme states. One is dead, the other pregnant. Roote is outraged by this violation of the order he has tried to preserve, even though 6459 has slept with most of the staff, probably including Roote: "We all know the rules.... Never ride bareback and always send in a report." Gibbs's exaggerated courtesy toward Roote barely masks his contempt, of which Roote is fitfully aware. The investigation Gibbs undertakes is an elaborate plan to displace him. First, he subjects Lamb to a painful electrical test that determines he is "virgo intacto," thus innocent of the pregnancy; then he announces that Lamb is the culprit.

By the end of the play, someone—presumably the one survivor, Gibbs—has permitted the patients to massacre the entire staff. In his report to the minister about this "rather unfortunate business," Gibbs says that "two things especially had made [Roote] rather unpopular. He had seduced patient 6459 and been the cause of her pregnancy, and he had murdered patient 6457. That had not gone down too well with the rest of the patients." The play ends with Gibbs in charge and Lamb, still in his soundproof room, frozen in catatonia, staring into space.

A brief synopsis cannot begin to suggest Pinter's twists and turns from scene to scene and within scenes, or the way he manages to create abrupt, surprising, yet utterly convincing shifts in mood and tone. Roote's efforts to distinguish one numbered patient from another lead to a wonderful comedy of confusion. When another member of the staff, Lush, insinuates that Roote may have achieved "a substantial result" with patient 6459, Roote throws a glass of whiskey in his face—twice, with no discernible reaction from the victim. Roote unaccountably punches Lush in the stomach six times. Roote, Lush, and Gibbs engage in a bizarre duel involving knives and a bayonet. Roote's Christmas present from the staff is a cigar which explodes in his face.

PINTER'S TYPICALLY clipped, terse, almost stacatto dialogue here is the agent of a strong emotional undercurrent which often breaks out into physical violence; and the play, for all its familiar Pinterian mystery and menace, also possesses a cogent farcical urgency that builds to a remorseless indictment of totalitarian procedures. These qualities have been caught perfectly by Eugene Lee's set at Trinity Square Rep—a cage made out of pipes and doors and grates and grilles, crowned by a clock with only one hand. Adrian Hall's production likewise has identified the appropriate tone—flat, uninflected, punctuated by the slamming of gates and doors—with which to express the deadened nature of this ghastly place, though some of the performances may be a bit too literal and naturalistic to realize the full manic thrust of the climactic scenes. Richard Kavanaugh as

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Gibbs—a mass murderer in a three-piece suit—captures the repressed viciousness of a smarmy bureaucrat who wears his face like a mask, and George Martin brings nagging bewilderment and shocking volatility to Roote. The production will no doubt be more frightening when it moves closer to the precipice of human extremes, but even at this somewhat tentative stage, the vibrations of an angry consciousness still manage to keep the atmosphere electric.

Pinter elected to take another look at this long-neglected play, and to direct it himself in London. We have no way of knowing what influenced his decision, but I think we should be grateful for it. *The Hothouse* shows us a Pinter moved more by a capacity for indignation than by a love of elegance—Pinter as redskin rather than paleface. This is a way of saying that it is animated by a boiling energy he hasn't shown in his work since *The Homecoming*, and a sense of personal engagement he perhaps has never shown. Resurrecting this work may suggest that, dissatisfied with the wispy attenuations of his Mayfair period, he is preparing to turn volcanic once again. If so, I will look forward to his next play with a good deal more eagerness than I have awaited his works in the past.

The Unseen Hand, an early play by Sam Shepard, having been recently mounted as part of La Mama's anniversary series, has now moved to the Provincetown Playhouse for what deserves to be a healthy run. Directed with flair by Tom Barsha, it is being solidly performed by a strong cast including Beeson Carroll, Deirdre O'Connell, and Michael Brody. The automobile graveyard set is by Dorian Vernacchio; the lighting by Anne E. Militello; the costumes are by Allison Connor; and the sound effects by James Hardy.

I use the *New Yorker* method of listing everyone involved with the show not in order to fill up space, and not for the sake of the record, but because everyone is worthy of mention by virtue of vigorous and committed work. Although a majority of American audiences has yet to catch up with Shepard, a majority of American actors certainly knows how to perform him, especially those from the Coast and those associated with the Off-Off-Broadway movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Shepard has moved on since *The Unseen Hand* into an advanced style of metaphorical realism *(Buried Child, True West)*, rather like Pinter with a purpose and a country accent. Still, it is nice to revisit this strong example of his hallucinogenic period, when he was trying to write the dramatic equivalent of acid rock. Shepard is really psyched by America, our spacey vernacular, our junkyard culture, our desert landscape, and he is especially freaked by our lunatic geography and pop mythology. *The Unseen Hand* takes place in a real place named Azusa, where "an old juicer on the way out" named Blue Morphan encounters a wayward creature from outer space named Willy the Space Freak. Obviously, anything goes in a country which can call a town Azusa, and anything does. Shepard wrings all the possible comic and mythic possibilities out of this West Coast phantasmagoria before resolving the situation in song: "Let the world alone to take care of itself . . . just let it be."

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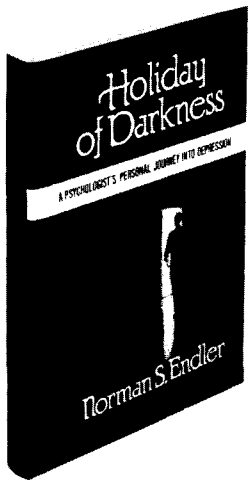

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MARK CRISPIN MILLER ON TELEVISION

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"Everyone sees what you seem to be, few perceive what you are; and those few don't dare oppose the general opinion, which has the majesty of the government backing it up." Thus Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, suggests that most people put their trust in what they see, and that the would-be ruler must exploit this mass credulity by wielding his image with subtle skill. What everyone wants, above all, is a good show: "The masses are always impressed by appearances and by the outcome of an event—and in the world there are only masses. The few have no place there when the many crowd together." If he wants to stay in charge (and in health), a ruler has to please those staring and complacent multitudes with a public pose of sanctity, which will let him carry on the gruesome work of politics without losing his footing. The man who can thus remain on top, seeming good while doing necessary evil, is a figure of *virtù*, a term implying "power," "courage," "talent," "will," "strength of character," and other qualities of a heroic individualism.

Machiavelli showed considerable prescience when he wrote his bitter treatise in 1513: "The whole world is watching," *The Prince* points out, and now the networks and the satellites have translated that metaphor into literal truth. If politics has become less dangerous since the Renaissance, it has also, because of television, become a lot more superficial. In order to prevail today, the plucky office-seeker may not have to arrange clandestine stranglings, but he had better cultivate an understated manner and a level gaze, keep his statements short, and wear a light blue shirt at all times. This bland facility is now the main requirement for political success, even among those few who run for President.

And so, if Machiavelli were alive today, he would probably update his book with some reflections on how our Presidents use television, and vice versa. He was, for his era, an unusually scientific sort of theorist, basing his principles on actual cases. He based *The Prince* primarily on the example of that efficient monster, Cesare Borgia; and he would certainly base his new chapters on the career of Ronald Reagan, the smoothest surface this side of the Iron Curtain.

Reagan would seem to be the latest model in *virtù* itself. On the one hand, he approaches all the ugly tasks of his regime with the exalted ruthlessness of Frederick Barbarossa, "stout Cortez," or, to adopt a more appropriate model, Dirty Harry: Reagan "shoots straight" and "gets tough," he goes by "horse sense," he's got plenty of "guts" and "balls" and other meaty attributes. And yet, even as he earns such right-wing plaudits, Reagan still manages to come across as an easygoing, *decent* fella. It is an impressive contradiction. Here is a President who takes from the poor to give to the rich, has supported infanticide abroad, ravages his own countryside, and props up brutal dictatorships; and yet, whenever he appears, he has you thinking, somehow, that he's "a nice guy."

Of course, if we judge Ronald Reagan by his actions, or by his inclinations, or even by the company he keeps, we have to conclude that he is not nice at all, if "nice" is taken to mean "kind" or "good." On the contrary, Reagan is "nice" as Iago is "honest"—that is, he is extraordinarily adept at affecting tones and postures which people trust without thinking. In other words, Reagan is considered "nice," not because he is nice, but in part because his image answers (temporarily) the emotional needs of quite a few Americans, who, tired of feeling cynical about their leaders, will swallow anything. And, like a good TV commercial, Reagan's image goes down easy, calming his audience with sweet inversions of the truth.

First of all, the image is meant to make the viewers think that Reagan is someone "just like you and me." Although this Administration has made a public point of dragging pomp and ostentation back into the White House, Reagan himself seems like a humble janitor at heart. Even at the dressiest affairs, and on the grandest state occasions, he has us thinking that he wears white socks and carries a pen-knife. Aside from partly obscuring the vulgar opulence of the Reagans and their tribe, this seeming averageness has the effect of distancing the President from his cruel strokes of policy—you wouldn't think such a *nice guy* could *do* such things, as shocked neighbors often put it on the evening news.

So far, this seems like basic statecraft, of the sort that Machiavelli would have grasped at once. However, he would have had a little trouble understanding how anyone could believe in Reagan's pose of commonness, which bears no clear relation to the world we commonly inhabit. In order to comprehend how Reagan can seem "just like you and me" without resembling anyone on earth, Machiavelli would have to sit through hours of bad old movies, pore over hundreds of dime novels and Horatio Alger stories, and otherwise school himself in the recurrent images of American myth. Only then would he perceive that Ronald Reagan is merely an anthology of the worst of American popular culture, edited for television. He comforts us, not by epitomizing what we are, but by reminding us of what we used to think we were, or, perhaps, of what we think we used to be. In either case, his image is an eloquent symbol of reaction, forever promising the return of an illusory past.

Reagan seems to face us from within that past; he seems never to have fallen into modern times, or even into adulthood. Despite his advanced age, he comes across as a giant child who would be father to us frightened men and women. While we struggle in the world from day to day, making less and fearing more and more, homeless and uncertain, Ronald Reagan calls his wife "Mommy," and sports the same haircut that he wore when Hitler took over the Sudetenland. Although withered, he seems permanently boyish—not like an actual boy, of course, but something like a boy in an old movie: the lop-sided grin, the wavy thatch, the eyebrows impishly tilted, etc., remind us of all

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those scrubbed and hearty little guys in *Boys Town* and a hundred other movies of the Great Depression. Such a man, we sense, must be as sincere and innocent as anyone ever played by Mickey Rooney; and his policies, we hope, might let us live those happy days once brought to us by MGM.

OF COURSE, the Reagan image also has its commanding aspect, but it too seems anachronistic, and faintly puerile: the big old sheriff, protector of the weak, loping toward Air Force One with his little lady at his side. Although this pose demands the obligatory Western gear, it comes through more in Reagan's oratorical style than in his boots and shirts. He speaks quietly, a little hesitantly, with his eyes to the ground, as if not used to public speaking; and he often punctuates his statements with a folksy little waggle of the head and shoulders, so that we won't take his speechifying too seriously. All in all, the style suggests another complex pose of innocence—this President is a pure-hearted cowpoke, respectful to the ladies, wry and self-effacing with the boys.

Although these personae are derived from the movies, Reagan's Hollywood apprenticeship has, perhaps, been overemphasized by the casual students of his rise. His film career was undistinguished, because his celluloid image was basically too dim and vacuous to withstand the competition of more vivid presences. But this very emptiness has made him perfect for TV, which thrives on mundane types, demanding a pseudo-homely style which Reagan puts on easily. While he couldn't fill the grand patterns of the silver screen, then, he has managed, with immense success, to adapt those patterns to the smaller scale of television. Moreover, he has learned to liven up his every televised appearance with frequent shifts in expression, constant movements of the head, lots of warm chuckles and ironic shrugs and sudden frowns of manly purpose. Such perpetual motion is a must on television, and a must for Ronald Reagan, who tends to lose his charm when he comes to rest. At such terrifying moments of repose, all the boyishness drains out of him, and he suddenly starts looking like an anaconda, with his beady eyes and flat lipless head.

As long as he's running smoothly, however, Reagan is unfailingly attractive, not at all like a predator, nor, in fact, like anything other than what he seems—"a nice guy," pure and simple. However hard we try to glimpse the man concealed within that jovial disguise, Reagan remains impenetrable, a pleasing surface through and through. Machiavelli would have to marvel at such a thoroughgoing facade, and we too should appreciate the spectacle, after all the bad performances we've suffered through for years: LBJ, abusing his dogs and exposing his belly; Richard Nixon, hunched and glistening like a cornered toad; Gerald Ford, forever tipping over; Jimmy Carter, with his maudlin twang and interminable kin. While each of these men, appallingly, kept lunging at us from behind the mask of power, Reagan's mask and face are as one. It's been a long time since we've seen such integrity in government. Indeed, not since John Kennedy have we had such a united front for a chief executive.

HOW DOES Reagan do it? Or rather, how is it done? Machiavelli too would wonder about this, and would try, in his new afterword on modern politics, to work out an explication of Reagan's strange success. And he would find that this success is based not only on the original tenets of *The Prince*, but on those tenets modernized for the demands of television.

First of all, Machiavelli would try to account for the fact that Reagan, despite his daily atrocities, continues to seem "nice." Although this persistent air of sweetness owes much to Reagan's earnest yokelism, it also results from the clever use of prominent patsies, a strategy which Machiavelli recommends specifically in his treatise: "Princes should delegate the ugly jobs to other people, and reserve the attractive functions for themselves." Reagan is kept seemingly innocent by this device: David Stockman, a mere instrument, used to take the heat for Reagan's cuts and slashes, Al Haig often seems like the one who *really* wants to crush the Cubans, and so on. Thus people have been able to persist in the belief that their President is just and well intentioned, and that any ill consequences of his rule are only the capricious doings of his subordinates.

Although this tactic, in itself, does not depend on visual effects (it worked long before the invention of TV), it implies a corollary which has proven indispensable to this Administration,

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whose shrinking appeal is based entirely on appearances. In this age of television, it matters less what people do than what they look like. Therefore, the function of the President's men is not just to make his policies seem like their mistakes, but also to make the President himself look better by contrast with themselves. If Machiavelli were to update his directive in accordance with the current practice, he would say: "A president should surround himself with ugly people doing ugly jobs, in order to seem that much more attractive himself by doing no job at all."

Guided by the spirit of this precept, some unknown genius, or ingenious committee, assembled Ronald Reagan's Administration, employing that same skill and subtlety with which the President himself had been assembled. Few chief executives have gained so much from their associates; beside his aides, Reagan seems to take on warmth, authenticity, even vitality, and other alien qualities.

Everyone in this Administration has a real job, providing some of the essential contrast that makes Reagan seem credibly human. Even the qualities of the colorless serve this purpose. For instance, there are those unremarkable men, like Caspar Weinberger and Donald Regan, who simply look like Republicans, i.e., as if their one desire in life is to repossess your house. These sober corporate types serve to offset those maverick qualities that once made Reagan seem like something fresh. And then there are those solid staffers—Ed Meese, James Baker, Larry Speakes, etc. —who look something like an assortment of boiled eggs. Compared to them, Reagan seems like someone with a lot of character in his face, or at least like someone with a face.

Then there are the more important and misleading contrasts, involving Reagan and the superstars of this production. As the youth in charge of deprivations, for instance, David Stockman was, before his lapse, a perfect foil for Reagan. His was the zeal and excessive cleanness of the untried moralist, which allowed the craggy Reagan to seem (for a while) restrained and wise. General Alexander Haig has something of the same effect on Reagan's image. He is an openly belligerent cold warrior, and otherwise behaves like someone who should be watched at all times. He first made this impression during Nixon's twilight period, when he wrested sinister control over the household, like Mrs. Danvers in *Rebecca*; and then, after last year's shooting, he blurted, "I am in control!" which clearly suggested that he wasn't. Despite these hints of madness, or rather because of them, Haig stays firmly in his place, making Reagan seem moderate, and perhaps even necessary.

But the most perverse and daring stroke of contrast in this spectacle is, of course, the appointment of James Watt as Secretary of the Interior. Watt would be unbearable in any visible capacity, but placing him as guardian of our virgin spaces and small furry animals was a particularly sadistic move. Looking like something hewn from the very bedrock which he longs to disrupt, Watt has made a special talent of his loathesomeness, with his incoherent jeering and his fits of hostile piety. Reagan has suggested that forests cause lung cancer, but next to Watt he starts to look like Johnny Appleseed.

AND, FINALLY, there is Nancy, Reagan's own Mommie Dearest, whose frozen presence at her husband's side suggests, paradoxically, that Reagan is a man of passion. The President can also seem mellow and outdoorsy by appearing alongside this rigid wife. Making their way in and out of distant conveyances, the two of them act out a little pageant that celebrates the contradictory values of the right, he dressed as a lumberjack or wrangler, she in some lurid swatch of *haute couture*. Reagan does not ordinarily come across as very physical, but he seems as warm and earthy as a farm animal when accompanied by Nancy who, glassy-eyed and overdressed, always looks as if she has just been struck by lightning in a limousine.

Stockman, Watt, Haig, and Mommy have served their purpose beautifully, humanizing the President in the eyes of most Americans, and, at the same time, gladdening Reagan's true believers by appearing cold and hateful, which is, among the ultraright, not a shortcoming but a sign of grace. As useful as Reagan's satellites have been, however, neither they nor Reagan's charms would have accomplished anything without the full support of our journalists, particularly those who use a camera. "While it always helps to surround the President with freaks," Machiavelli would go on to say, "it is even more important that he learn to snow the press."

WHY IS IT that we think of Ronald Reagan as "a nice guy"? And is it "we" who think it? In fact, it is not the growing numbers of the unemployed, the desperate single mothers, the students and teachers forced to leave school, or the farmers, or the union members, or the old, or the young, or the poor, or the middle class, who keep babbling about how "nice" the President is. Those who find him "nice" are in a dwindling group, comprised of some defense contractors, a few lunatics in Orange County, and most of our TV newsmen, who persist as Reagan's biggest boosters. "He's a nice guy," Bill Moyers recently asserted. "I'm gonna admit something," Sam Donaldson has said. "He's a hard President to cover for most reporters, because he is such an amiable, warm, human being." (So much for journalistic ethics.)

Innocuous as they may seem, these mawkish tributes are deplorable. First of all, they cannot be dismissed as detached and harmless observations, because there is no such thing on televisions news: such "commentary" always works to half create (at least) the phenomena which it seems merely to describe. When Sam Donaldson calls Reagan "warm" and "amiable," that opinion, casual or not, immediately takes on the pressure of a fact, and so Reagan becomes warm and amiable, even if he isn't. More importantly, the newsmen's general fondness for Reagan explains, in part, the respectfulness with which his image was broadcast throughout the campaign. The press, and TV in particular, elected Ronald Reagan by playing to his strengths, by letting him evince himself in all his "niceness," by politely avoiding any shots or revelations that might have compromised the seeming wholeness of his image. He came across as a man disinterested, natural, and pure, the innocent object of Carter's

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"mean campaign," which appeared, by comparison, to stink of politics.

Thus Reagan won because his image was a perfect television spectacle. Now that he's in power, however, it would seem that he might be in danger of extinction by the very medium that created him. His chummy style has created certain problems. For instance, it is still true, as Machiavelli once wrote, that "a prince must see to it that his actions bespeak greatness, courage, dignity, and strength"; and yet, evidently, a President now has to seem "nice" and approachable, everybody's pal. How can a leader seem both great and small? How does he get "closer" to television without succumbing to its equalizing tendencies? For television is, indeed, subversive, more dangerous to a President's well-being than any number of imaginary Libyans. It is an antiheroic medium, straining out charisma and amplifying little flaws; and it tends to exhaust the appeal of its stars very quickly.

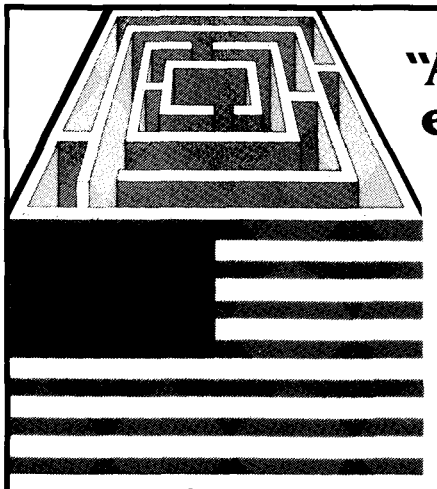
It is therefore necessary for the would-be leader to cultivate a new kind of reserve. "Having encircled the President with truly odious people," Machiavelli would advise, "and having gotten him in good with the reporters, you must always take care to *keep him at a distance*." This rule is not a simple one, as the example of Reagan's image demonstrates. First of all, a President should not be allowed to get too close to the cameras. Like Reagan, he should always appear far away and in transit, waving merrily at everyone, as if going to the beach. Such brief and cheerful appearances will keep the President looking young, and will lessen the risk of his saying something that someone else will only have to rephrase later.

HOWEVER, keeping the President far away involves more than simply putting space between him and the minicams. One reason for this distancing is to obscure the fact that the President is mortal, and this objective sometimes demands measures other than simply physically removing him. As in Reagan's case, it can demand plastic surgery, the liberal use of Grecian Formula 16 and an occasional outlandish fiction, such as last year's story that the President, after getting shot, came tap dancing into the emergency room and then did schtick during surgery. As one whose actions should "bespeak greatness," furthermore, the President must never be seen to do anything patently silly, a kind of distancing which sometimes calls for a little prudent suppression. Last May, for instance, the Dick Clark Company, for a show called "TV Censored Bloopers," tried to get hold of some old movie outtakes that (according to *Variety*) "included muffed lines by Reagan and others as well as failed props." The footage was refused. Even Richard Nixon once tried to cut loose on television grumbling "sock it to me!" on "Laugh-In"; but this President, seemingly so genial and relaxed, never appears televised without seeming carefully closed.

These are understandable and even necessary ploys, especially from Machiavelli's point of view. If leadership is to succeed at winning the devotion of a people, it can't go around exposing itself, flaunting its liver spots, its aches and pains, its flubs and stumbles. A man of *virtù* must avoid such disquieting candor; he must neither show his scars, nor tell of close calls with homicidal rabbits, but withhold himself as Ronald Reagan seems to do, remaining perfectly hidden behind an awesome mask.

However, Machiavelli, watching Reagan walk and talk, might start to get a little nervous. When he advised the deft construction of a noble public faith, he assumed, of course, that someone would be there behind it. This, as we know, is no longer a necessary feature of political leadership; the phrase "Reagan's image" is redundant. With a good staff and some of the cleverest equipment money can buy, Reagan does not need to be present when he's on the air, nor, therefore, at any other time. His only job is to enact those functions devised by his programmers, and he does this in a very life-like way. Thus the influence of the media has brought Machiavellian doctrine to bizarre fulfillment: the best way for the modern prince to keep his real self hidden is not to have one.

And the television news people continue their involvement in this fantasy. Having gotten Reagan into office, these entertainers are now trying to reverse themselves, suddenly acting leery and impartial, affecting that hardboiled skepticism that lets them feel like journalists. While this new antagonism has resulted in a few illuminating stories on



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the evening news, most of what passes for critical coverage is merely third-rate theater criticism. We hear about "gaffes," "embarrassments," "tense moments," spokesmen getting slightly riled, and are meant to take these trivial slips as somehow tantamount to major scandal.

This is partly the result of the reporters' inability, what with the many deadlines and the need for footage, to do much more than show up at the daily briefings, press conferences, and state receptions, which they scan (in vain) for something meaningful. The obsession with appearances, however, is not just an isolated consequence of the reporters' schedules: it comprises their essential orientation, which is something that they have in common with the men who run the country. The press and the President's men may act like adversaries, but they're really in cahoots, working together to call attention to the President's image, and to nothing else. Evidently the declining quality of American life is less important than how the viewers think about that image. In a paradigmatic encounter with Reagan last January, Dan Rather sounded more like a publicist than an interviewer, talking about "perceptions" and "signals," at one point making this assessment: "This is going to be a continuing problem for you, *getting people to believe* that you really do know what's going on in the interior of your Administration" (emphasis added). Reagan's not knowing what's going on would seem to be *our* "continuing problem," not his, and one of disastrous proportions; but Rather, with the assumptions typical of his profession, could see the danger only as a problem of packaging.

THUS TELEVISION has reduced our political culture to a succession of gestures, postures, automatic faces. Machiavelli, taking note of all this feeble imagery, would lay his pen down with a tired sigh. "So much for *virtù*," he would say to himself, wondering what became of those creative few whose fierce talents he had once sought to define. And, while thinking of that vanished strength, he would probably contemplate this new absurdity: that *virtù*, which once enabled the startling individual to control the impressions of his image, has itself declined into an image; and this image of the mighty individual is a corporate fiction, the careful work of committees and think tanks, repeatedly reprocessed by the television industry for daily distribution to a mass audience.

The modern prince, in other words, is entirely a creature of TV, which sets him up and breaks him down according to its own implicit schedule—he thrives only as a novelty, then turns at once into a joke or a nostalgia item. This precariousness is nothing new in the world of politics. "Let me observe," writes Machiavelli toward the conclusion of *The Prince*, "that we can see a prince flourishing today and ruined tomorrow, and yet no change has taken place in his nature or in any of his qualities." Machiavelli ascribed such reverses to the influence of the goddess Fortune, the fickle arbiter of all men's ups and downs. "The prince who relies entirely on Fortune comes to destruction the moment she changes," while the prince who counts on his own *virtù* might be able to endure.

But whereas a prince could presumably master Fortune if he made a hero's effort, no President can ever beat TV, no matter how slick and likable his image. Even the well-made Ronald Reagan is finally, and with great subtlety, being dismantled by the anchormen, who now begin to make him seem, although still "nice," a quaint and slightly ludicrous old figurehead. And if Reagan's sturdy image can be thus subverted, any politicians' can as every President's is. As with Reagan, so it was with Carter, with Ted Kennedy, with Gerald Ford, etc., and so it will surely be with all the rest. Our candidates will continue to flash by between commercials, seeming to inhabit no real space, offering nothing but a short performance; and so we'll watch as we watch everything, not bothering to participate, because participation won't be needed. The show, we'll figure numbly, must go on.

IDIOTS AND GENIUSES

The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert, 1821-1857, Volume I
by Jean-Paul Sartre
translated by Carol Cosman

(University of Chicago Press, 627 pp., $25)

Sartre and Flaubert
by Hazel E. Barnes

(University of Chicago Press, 449 pp., $25)

The decision to publish these two books is almost as interesting as the books themselves. Thanks to the University of Chicago Press, we now have, in Carol Cosman's exceptionally able and readable translation, a modest chunk—a mere 627 pages—of Sartre's monumental, uncompleted study of Flaubert. In French, *The Family Idiot* is a three-volume, 2,800-page work; Cosman has translated Part One, which takes up about two-thirds of the first volume. The entire work brings us up to 1857, the year in which *Madame Bovary* was published. Sartre's analysis of that novel was to constitute Volume Four. In Part One, Sartre gets no further than Flaubert's adolescence, and he offers forbiddingly long analyses of the short stories from the 1830s which most nonacademic admirers of Flaubert have probably not even heard of, much less read. And for those hardy readers unable to attack the French, but whose appetite will have been whetted for still more about the young, pre-*Bovary* Flaubert, Hazel E. Barnes's companion work—itself by no means a slim volume—will lead them, at a pace respectful of Sartre's own reluctance to rush things, through the remaining 2,000 pages or so of psychological probing, literary analysis, and cultural history.

Apart from a minuscule elite of Flau-

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bert and Sartre scholars, who can the audience for these two books possibly be? It looks as if the University of Chicago Press has committed a commercially suicidal act of cultural heroism. Of course, "Sartre on Flaubert" is quite a drawing card; a good number of unsuspecting buyers will surely be seduced by that prestigious couple. And yet we should perhaps insist on the unreasonable nature of this publishing event; to do so will help us to define the pro found interest and originality of Sartre's work. There is a peculiar congruence between the adventurous publication of *The Family Idiot* and the outlandish nature of Sartre's interminable, barely edited "fragment" on Flaubert. In both events we are dealing with events of cultural excess, even of cultural freakishness.

BUT WHO WAS more of a cultural freak than Flaubert? More accurately, Flaubert set the stage for a view of modernity in art as a kind of cultural monstrosity. He initiated modernism by exemplifying and arguing for the artist's social alienation and the absolute value of Art. Sartre was, of course, anything but a social hermit, and he consistently argued for an art of *engagement*, of philosophical, moral, and political commitment. If, as he notes in the preface to Volume One of *The Family Idiot*, he felt for a long while that he "had a score to settle with Flaubert," this was largely because of the antipathy aroused in him by the latter's misanthropy and apparently exclusive, maniacal devotion to the shaping of perfect sentences. While there is evidence to support Sartre's claim that his original antipathy had changed to empathy by the time he wrote *The Family Idiot*, his study of Flaubert is nonetheless a clinical demystification (at once savage and funny) of whatever glamour may still adhere to clichés about the artist's isolation and the glorious autonomy of art. Flaubert, as we shall see, can be analyzed as an "idiot," and Sartre implies that if the author of *Madame Bovary* has been revered as the original oracle, or the high priest, of the most prestigious cult of modern art, this is the logical consequence of his disability and not in spite of it. The Flaubertian notion of art and the Flaubertian practice of art are the results of the most radical incompetence, of what Sartre calls Flaubert's constitutional "inadequacy" and "inferiority."

The principal interest of this demonstration lies in its own gliding toward a socially nonviable form of writing. And in the face of this curious development, we should perhaps ask ourselves to what extent culture itself depends on the production and the transmission of such cultural monsters as the Flaubertian oeuvre and *The Family Idiot*. In helping to transmit Sartre's work to a public which can hardly be counted upon to read it, the University of Chicago Press perpetuates which might be called the circulation of an unreceivable cultural product. The publishers of *The Family Idiot* thereby perform the invaluable service of forcing us to reconsider—as Sartre himself brilliantly does in his study of Flaubert—some of our most cherished pieties about the communication of cultural forms.

In order to conduct this reappraisal, we should first of all be very clear about what Sartre's study does *not* do—or at least about the futility of arguing for or against some of the claims made for his Flaubert epic. The two major irrelevant questions are whether or not Sartre has captured the "real" Flaubert, and whether or not he gives us the "right" readings of Flaubert's works. Scholars from the prosperous Flaubert industry have naturally gone after Sartre on both these points, and it should be said that Sartre left himself open for attack on the biographical front. For example, he emphasized in an interview that he had tried to write "the truth about Flaubert," and that in an earlier remark he had "exaggerated a bit" in calling *The Family Idiot* a "novel."

Without even considering the probably unanswerable question of what biographical truth might consist of (when do a biographer's psychological conjectures start to be unreliable? Can we even be sure that the "personality" assumed by biographers is anything more than a tenet of biographical ideology itself?), we can note that Sartre signals very early in Part One how far his own ambitions are from those of biographical scholarship. His extravagant invention of the inner life of Flaubert's mother on the basis of practically no evidence at all should—Sartre's own protests notwithstanding—alert us to the fact that in a conventional sense this biography is worth nothing. I don't mean that Sartre may not have hit on some obsessive thoughts and feelings in the Flaubert family. Rather, given the kind of relaxed arrogance with which he opens the most secret, obviously unknowable recesses of his subjects' minds to us, it can be assumed that the pressures behind this bloated fictional narrative have nothing to do with the (official) intentions of scholarly biographies.

Sartre is sustained for 2,800 pages by something else, and all the rest may be just a cover-up. The announcement in the very first sentence of the work that the subject of *The Family Idiot* is "what, at this point in time, [we can know] about a man," the occasional attempts to reconcile a confessed "fabrication" with what may be "the real explanation" of an aspect of Flaubert's life, and the elaborate, pseudo-rigorous methodological apparatus: all this only thinly disguises the instructive and fascinating madness of Sartre's enterprise. Sartre can't stop producing Flaubert, he can't stop making him (the sexual connotations are by no means irrelevant). Sartre says of Flaubert that he could understand himself only by meditating on an imaginary character. Let's apply this remark to its author: *The Family Idiot* is a confession, Sartre's "understanding of himself" through the very excess of his "meditation" on an imaginary Flaubert.

I SHOULD SAY at once that Hazel Barnes would surely object to this reading. Her "critical introduction" to *The Family Idiot*, an intelligent guide to Sartre's work, is essentially of the "Sartre-sez-I-sez" variety. She takes on the exhausting task of determining the amount of truth in each of Sartre's statements. Where is he right, where did he go wrong? Thus, Sartre's claim that Flaubert felt his father's death as a liberation (and even vaguely looked forward to his mother's death to complete his deliverance) gets an admonishing rap on the knuckles from Professor Barnes: "I think he overstates the case. Once again I think we should remind ourselves that feelings of deliverance and relief are not incompatible with genuine sorrow." Professor Barnes's book is full of such formulas as "I confess that for me Sartre at this point has simply gone too far," and "I am unable to go along with this view myself," and "Speaking for myself, I find all of this comment on [Emma Bovary's] 'masculinity' a bit exaggerated."

One must, of course, admire Professor Barnes's willingness to put her own opinions on the line. Faithful, in a

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sense, to her subject, she has written an *engagé*—as well as a generally engaging—study of Sartre. But her normalizing of Sartre tends to be rather deadening; in proposing that he be more sensible than he apparently wishes to be, Professor Barnes (like several other distinguished critics of *The Family Idiot*) does a therapeutic job on Sartre's work that frequently seems designed to cure it of its originality and to deprive it of its force. *The Family Idiot* is essentially an appropriation, a grand gesture of critical power. And this exercise of power is identical to an act of reading. What are Sartre's reading strategies? And how do these strategies begin to transform his own text into an unintended argument for the text being read? Sartre's study of Flaubert makes cultural history not by any new revelations about "the real Flaubert," but rather by the ways in which it simultaneously absorbs, suppresses, and surrenders to the prestigious phenomenon of Flaubert in French cultural history.

APPROPRIATELY, and significantly, Sartre begins *The Family Idiot* by emphasizing that "this future writer stumbled when it came to the prime test, his apprenticeship in words." Apparently, Flaubert's older brother and younger sister had no trouble learning to read; but for longer than it should have taken, poor Gustave "could not grasp the elementary connections that make letters into syllables, syllables into a word." Why was the younger son of the eminent Dr. Flaubert so doltish? It is, Sartre suggests, "as if the verbal process were only half completed" in the child's linguistic understanding. Meaning, "instead of becoming a conceptual and practical schema," remains "bound to the sign." Sentences are not dissolved into their sense; the child receives and understands them as an "objective power," as heavy material blocks simply passed onto him by others. To put this in another way, he receives language as a set of commands rather than as statements which express intentions and establish human reciprocity.

Such a confusion between sign and meaning can only signify "a poor initial relationship with the Other," and to explain little Gustave's crippled relation to language Sartre embarks on a psychological and social anatomy of the Flaubert family which I can describe here only in the barest outline. Gustave was born into the social contradictions of what Sartre calls "a semipatriarchal [family] structure with liberal opinions and a clodhopper parvenu at its head, a peasant from childhood, an intellectual by advancement." Gustave's father, Achille-Cléophas Flaubert, who was to become medical director at the Hospice in Rouen, was the son of a royalist veterinarian. Sartre describes Achille-Cléophas as

> a mutant who had had a peasant upbringing and who had leapt all at once to the upper reaches of the middle class . . . , preserving in himself that explosive mixture of rural tradition and bourgeois ideology.

In a sense, Gustave is "nothing more than the family itself as experienced by one of its members"—that is, a convergence of contradictions between royalist and bourgeois sympathies, between the antagonistic classes of rural landowners and urban industrialists, between religious belief and free-thinking utilitarianism, and, finally, between an authoritarian family dominated by the paterfamilias and the emerging "conjugal" family of more or less equal individuals. In this semipatriarchal bourgeois family, children were, so to speak, loved structurally rather than personally, according to their place in the family rather than their individual qualities. But if Gustave and his older brother Achille were the objects of "a conscientious and austere love that was not particularized," Achille could at least enjoy the honor of following in the footsteps of the paterfamilias. For while the right of primogeniture had been abolished when Gustave was born, the "capricious and sovereign subjectivity" of Dr. Flaubert revived it for his own family "and affirmed it by creating a younger son so that he might be affected by an inferior status."

NOT ONLY DID the doctor (in Sartre's reading of this family drama) stop taking any interest at all in his younger son before the latter reached the age of ten; little Gustave could not even count on his mother's love. The paterfamilias' wife is one of Sartre's most absorbing creations. Anxious to undo her own murderous entrance into the world (her mother had died giving birth to her), less a loving mother to her sons than an "incestuous daughter" to the adored husband with whom she may have finally enjoyed the love of the father she lost when she was only ten, Caroline Flaubert scrupulously executes "the routine and concrete business of mothering" her sons without, Sartre writes, even noticing their singularity. She attends to them, as it were, without noticing them. If Gustave cries, if he is pricked by a pin, "a nimble hand allays the pain. . . . Washing, nursing, looking after things—these acts are performed without rushing but without useless affability." Thus the Flaubert child "has not discovered himself through a caress as flesh and as a supreme end in himself." He is the "object" rather than the "destination" of maternal acts.

THIS SUMMARY hardly does justice to the subtlety of Sartre's argument. In this section of his work, he is trying to describe an almost indescribable failure, a frequently imperceptible absence in the relations between parent and child which can nonetheless have momentous consequences for the child. Gustave is made to feel neither sovereign nor rebellious; he has no reason to be jubilant or angry. How, Sartre seems to be asking, can a mother awaken desire in a child? Or: how can she prompt him from the passive position of receiving attentions from the world to the more active wish to initiate relations with the world? "Without love and without rights, without aggressiveness or anguish, without agony but without value," Sartre's Gustave develops a "pathic" sensibility. He absorbs the acts of others without being challenged or provoked by their love to respond to those acts. Having internalized nonlove as the impossibility of self-love, Flaubert will never become "a demand in the world of others." Referring to his adolescence, he will call himself a "mushroom swollen with boredom"; the truth of Flaubert's being is that of a vegetable.

Is this analysis convincing? I would rather say that it is *necessary*. Henry James preferred to speak of the compositional function of certain of his novelistic characters rather than of their intrinsic worth. Similarly, Sartre's analysis of Flaubert's childhood is, in *The Family Idiot*, a kind of compositional necessity. He suggests that it is the only version of the Flaubert family which makes the Flaubertian view of art intelligible. This is interesting, first of all, from a psychoanalytic point of view. Sartre thought of *The Family Idiot* as a concrete demonstration of how psychoanalysis and Marxist sociology might be made to work together profitably. Sar-

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THE FASTEST GROWING CHURCH IN THE WORLD

by Brother Keith E. L'Hommedieu, D.D.

It's quite safe to say that of all the organized religious sects on the current scene, one church in particular stands above all in its unique approach to religion. The Universal Life Church is the only organized church in the world with no traditional religious doctrine. In the words of Kirby J. Hensley, founder, "The ULC only believes in what is right, and that all people have the right to determine what beliefs are right for them, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others."

Reverend Hensley is the leader of the worldwide Universal Life Church with a membership now exceeding 11 million ordained ministers of all religious beliefs. Reverend Hensley started the church in his garage by ordaining ministers by mail. During the 1960's, he traveled all across the country appearing at college rallies held in his honor where he would perform mass ordinations of thousands of people at a time. These new ministers were then exempt from being inducted into the armed forces during the undeclared Vietnam war.

In 1966 Reverend Hensley was fighting the establishment on another front. The IRS tried to claim the ULC wasn't a legal church and proceeded to impound the ten thousand dollars in the church bank account. The feisty Hensley filed suit against the IRS in federal district court for return of the funds and to permanently establish the ULC as a legal tax exempt entity. On March 1, 1974 Judge James F. Battin ruled against the IRS in his decision which stated, "Neither this court or any branch of this government will consider the merits or fallacies of a religion. Nor will the court praise or condemn a religion. Were the court to do so, it would impinge upon the guarantees of the First Amendment." The judge then ordered the IRS to return the impounded money and to grant the Universal Life Church its tax exempt status.

Reverend Hensley has stated that he believes a church is people and not just a fancy building. He also believes in total freedom and equality for all people. The ULC will ordain anyone without regard to religious beliefs, race, nationality, sex or age.

The ULC's success formula is both effective and unquestionably legal. After a person has become an ordained minister, he or she can join with two other people and form their own Universal Life Church. These three people then make up the Board of Directors consisting of a Pastor, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The ULC will then grant the group the use of its legal church charter complete with both federal and state tax exempt numbers. The newly formed church may then open a bank account in the church's name. Any member of the church can legally donate up to 50% of his or her outside income to the church and take a corresponding tax deduction. The church in turn can pay the complete housing cost of its minister including rent or mortgage payment, insurance, taxes, furnishings and repairs. The church can also provide the minister with full use of an automobile as well as pay for travel and educational expenses. None of these expenses are reported as income to the IRS. Recently a whole town in Hardenburg, New York became Universal Life ministers and turned their homes into religious retreats and monasteries thereby relieving themselves of property taxes, at least until the state tries to figure out what to do.

Brother L'Hommedieu is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Sacerdotal Order of the Universal Life and serves on the Board of Directors of the International Universal Life Church, Inc.

Churches enjoy certain other tax benefits over the common man on the street. For instance, a church can legally buy and sell real estate or stocks and bonds completely tax free. It can receive tax free income from bank deposits or mortgages. Many churches own large publishing, recording, or other related businesses like hospitals, clinics and schools without paying any income tax.

A church can sponsor any kind of fund raising event such as a concert, play or even bingo. Churches are also exempt from paying inheritance taxes. When the pastor of the church dies, the Board of Directors simply appoints a new pastor and the church goes on.

Reverend Hensley has stated that he personally doesn't believe in the tax exempt status of churches. However, if the government is going to give a free ride to Billy Graham and the Pope, then why not let everybody participate in these blessings. Furthermore, he backs his words up by offering to defend in court the tax exempt status of his congregations.

Since the church was founded in 1962, it has attracted members who are movie and TV personalities, businessmen, government officials, lawyers, and doctors as well as all types of regular working people. During the last 15 years the Universal Life church has blossomed into a full blown grass roots populace movement. Reverend Hensley is ordaining ten thousand new ministers a week and predicts that the church will have over 20,000,000 members by the early 1980's. In addition, requests for interviews and TV appearances continue to pour in.

Anyone who is a member of the ULC will tell you that the ULC is destined to change the world. By unifying mankind into a brotherhood of freedom orientated individuals, each respecting the other's right to live life as they see fit, the Universal Life Church hopes to put an end to all wars. Reverend Hensley admits that this is a pretty monumental task to accomplish, but he also points out that he is already well on the way to reaching his goal.

Rev. Hensley invites all those interested in becoming an ordained minister and receiving complete information and Minister's Credentials, to send a 10^{00} tax deductible donation to the Universal Life Church, 1335 Seabright Ave., Dept. 304, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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tre had a long-standing quarrel with the Freudian notion of the unconscious, but the psychoanalytic inquiry of Part One is essentially faithful to Freud. Sartre appears to be operating on what I take to be a fundamental premise of psychoanalysis: for the adult, childhood *does not exist* except as an explanatory fiction for adult life. This does not mean that Freud, as it has recently been argued, disparaged the real with his theory of fantasy. Rather, the presumed reality of our past is indistinguishable from those stories about our past which, one might say, are compositionally necessary to the sense of an individual's life. Our compulsion toward sense—our need to make the present intelligible—deprives us of memory.

Freud did not devalue the real past; rather, he recognized that we are psychically unequipped to define it except as a fiction of adult desires. In analogous fashion, Sartre's stories about little Gustave and the Flaubert family are an exceptionally inventive account of Flaubert the man, especially of Flaubert the writer, in terms of the way in which a human body is "treated"—taken care of and subject to various formative agents—during its first years of life. Part One of *The Family Idiot* de-sublimates the art of Flaubert into a fable about the misfortunes of Gustave's unloved body.

THE STRIKING RESULT of this exercise is to bring us back to Flaubert's writing with a new sense of its ambiguity as a cultural product. Specifically, the fiction about Flaubert's childhood is both an analytic and anecdotal detour which fuels Sartre's argument about the anticommunicative bias inherent in the Flaubertian aesthetic. The argument I refer to is crucial to an understanding of Sartre's lifelong ambivalence about literature itself. Gustave will learn to read, but Flaubert the writer will never understand the function of written language. Writing for Sartre is a praxis, a form of action in the world; thought makes use of words in a "signifying activity which reaches beyond its instrument toward the world." But Flaubert is incapable of grasping the instrumentality of language. He will never move beyond a fascination with those blocks of sound that—merely lent to the child by the All-powerful parent—"haunt him without belonging to him." As a result, meaning for Flaubert will always "remain in the words, referring only to themselves." Thus the strangely immobile beauty of the Flaubertian style, a style which freezes the world in the "obsessive materiality" of words. Flaubert does not challenge his father's world; rather, his "passive vengeance" against the unloving doctor will be to *de-realize* his world in the imaginary representations of an alien language which, like some unwanted object, has been simply left with him by the sovereign parent.

Thus "Flaubert never thinks. . . ." Sartre's verdict runs, "A genius, perhaps, a powerful mind, never." Incapable of using language to move either toward himself or toward the world, Flaubert becomes a writer not because of an exceptional capacity to use words, but rather as a consequence of a grave linguistic disorder. Flaubert's fascination with stupidity (he was, for example, an obsessive collector of clichés, and dreamt of composing a *Dictionary of Ready-Made Ideas*) reflects, Sartre argues, his own inability to use language actively, to see it as anything but "an interminable commonplace that was never based on the intention to express something or on the object being designated." "Read the *Correspondance* from start to finish; never will you find the birth of an idea, a new perception, an original point of view." The ideal Flaubertian audience is "an elite of *illiterate readers*"—or, rather, readers whom Flaubert transforms "into awestruck illiterates by making the beauty of words, of phrases, and of their architecture equivalent to the resistance" which Gustave himself finds in printed matter.

BUT 'THE FAMILY IDIOT' suggests, interestingly enough, that the Flaubertian pathology is nothing less than the essence of literature. It is as if the practice of writing inevitably became—or was at least threatened by—a subversion of language's power to communicate, or an exercise in blocked meanings. *The Family Idiot* is Flaubert's revenge on his analyst. In this immense and important work, we can follow the process by which Sartre himself begins to *produce paste*—that is, to begin writing if not "like" Flaubert, at least in a way consistent with what he defines as the Flaubertian aesthetic.

The appallingly repetitious nature of *The Family Idiot* is instructive here. Sartre, perhaps unlike Flaubert, is "a powerful mind," yet we see this mind being immobilized, nearly stultified at times, by the very attempts which it makes to clarify its thoughts through repetition. Instead of becoming progressively more transparent to its signifying projects, the Sartrean verbal sign takes on some of the opacity which it decries in the Flaubertian sign. The great contemporary promoter of writing as praxis begins to make literature—that is, to make visible an extremely problematic relation between words and their presumed meanings. Flaubert is not a "special" literary case. Rather, he advertises a generally concealed truth: the cultural value of art may have to do with the kind of mental paralysis which it induces. Art perhaps *should* make us into "awestruck illiterates" by plunging us into an infinite puzzlement about the uniquely human capacity to produce and to transmit sense.

COULD THIS, finally (and unexpectedly), be also the social and political value of literature? By drawing our attention to the materiality of verbal signs, the writer slows up the process by which we move from linguistic messages to other types of action in the world. Coercive political designs depend on our moving rapidly from the word to the world, on our being propelled from a transparent language into the meanings and projects which it designates. Literature plays back speech in slow motion, and it thereby invites a criticism of the meanings—of the beliefs and the choices—which speech proposes to us. The Flaubertian writer *is* a committed writer—but he is committed to subverting the effectiveness with which we are generally handled, or maneuvered, by language. *The Family Idiot* belongs to this class of writing, and not to the "Sartrean" writing which it misleadingly proposes as a kind of moral aesthetic against which to measure—and to judge—Flaubert. Precisely to the extent that Sartre's work reminds us of how literature can awaken us to a beneficient—and necessary—semantic idiocy, the publication of *The Family Idiot* should be welcomed as a major cultural event.

LEO BERSANI

Leo Bersani is professor of French at the University of California at Berkeley and author most recently of *The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Cambridge University Press).

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How Far Can You Go?

Souls and Bodies
by David Lodge

(William Morrow, 244 pp., $12.50)

Souls and Bodies is a novel about a group of unremarkable people. These twelve Englishmen and Englishwomen are Catholics; they meet in 1952 when they all join a New Testament study group in college. We first see them dutifully attending a rigorous early Thursday morning mass. At book's end, all but two are present at a "Paschal Festival" sponsored by an organization one of them has founded, the Catholics for an Open Church. At this festival people speak in tongues and spend their time in encounter-group sessions discussing the falsity of the doctrine of papal infallibility and the immorality of the Church's conservative stand on birth control. In between, Lodge guides us through three decades; we witness the changes in his characters' beliefs and the tenuousness of their faith through the great struggles of adulthood.

David Lodge is an English novelist and critic known slightly in this country for his last novel, *Changing Places.* That novel is an hilarious satire of academic life, both English and American. The new book is also frequently funny, but quietly searing. Like his characters, Lodge is searching for his faith and his religion; he himself appears frequently in the novel, delivering neat little essays on the moral impact of available contraception and sexual freedom. He even shows up at the Paschal Festival and speaks before his co-religionists. Lodge is, he makes clear, as much a subject for contemplation as his characters. This is a disquieting and daring step for an author to take, but Lodge's subject, after all, is *faith.* Only the completely faithful or faithless writer could, without seeming disingenuous or false, exclude himself from such an issue. *Souls and Bodies* is a passionate book; its author seeks the answers to the problems of religious faith on every page.

In the year 1952, believing Catholics still lived under the influence of "the traditional Catholic metaphysic—that marvelously complex and ingenious synthesis of theology and cosmology and casuistry."

> Up there was Heaven; down there was Hell. The name of the game was Salvation, the object to get to Heaven and avoid Hell. It was like Snakes and Ladders; sin sent you plummeting down towards the Pit; the sacraments, good deeds, acts of self-mortification enabled you to climb back towards the light. Everything you did or thought was subject to spiritual accounting.

Souls and Bodies was published in England with the title *How Far Can You Go?,* and it is this question which worries these quiet, decent people, among them: guiltily lustful Michael; Dennis, in love with Angela; Angela, a "good Catholic girl"; effeminate Miles; and young and terribly earnest Father Brierly. It is also a question the Church refuses to answer adequately as their lives progress into the 1960s. When Catholic theologians begin to question "the literal, physical virginity" of Mary; when they argue about the literal, physical conversion of the Eucharist into the body and blood of Christ; and when the Pope declares contraception a mortal sin while the Church hierarchy comes out with its own inefficient (and conceivably dangerous) method of birth control, the effects are palpable. The Church is sending out contradictory signals, and so the lives of our guides are fraught with contradiction. Father Brierly begins to preach the new rationalist dogma, and is sent away to be schooled in even more rationalist dogma. Angela and Dennis, now married, have a daughter born with Down's syndrome; a doctor friend, Edward, recognizes that their fidelity to the rhythm method may have been responsible, "genetic defects" being possibly "more likely when the ovum [is] fertilized towards the end of its brief life-span."

Dennis and Angela lose another child in a car accident; Michael develops what he fears is cancer; Ruth, the nun, has a crisis of faith until she is saved by an American Pentecostal Catholic and her friends, who are blessed with glossolalia. The novel concludes with that Paschal Festival, which so angers the Church that it takes action against Father Brierly and another participating cleric. The action comes too late; Brierly has already fallen in love with a woman and is preparing to leave the priesthood. The struggle of faith and the struggle to keep up with the times have worn out our guides. Dennis and Angela manage to cope; Michael leaves the Catholic college where he has been teaching Graham Greene to engineering students and becomes a freelance writer; Miles, disgusted by the liberalization, returns to High Episcopalianism. As for David Lodge: "I teach English literature at a redbrick university and write novels in my spare time, slowly, and hustled by history."

WE HAVE GROWN so accustomed to those highly praised novels in which adolescents discover sexual freedom, irrational violence wreaks its consequences on a wise but hapless hero, and the struggle of life is reduced to a battle between superego and id, that a good novel about a few people merely trying to *get by* may seem a rather small achievement. If so, then perhaps we have lost sight of the value and purpose of fiction. A great deal happens in this short novel, yet in Lodge's view human action and consequence are subsidiary to the questions raised by human action and consequence: *How far can you go? Where are the limits? What—who—defines the limits?*

When John Irving shows us T. S. Garp's wife's lover's castration during fellatio, he tells us nothing about the lover or the wife or, most important, about Garp himself. When John Updike's Rabbit bemoans his middle-aged flesh and weary member, it feels like we are being asked to watch him masturbate. When Dennis, in *Souls and Bodies,* falls miserably into the arms of his love-starved secretary, we wonder not *How good was it?* but *Has he gone too far?* When Father Brierly insists that transubstantiation is purely symbolic, we wonder not *Is he right?* but *Has he gone too far?* When Michael, once so worried about the Hell awaiting him for his onanism, gazes with fascination at Swedish sex films in Piccadilly Circus, we wonder, along with him, *Has the world gone too far? Where are the limits now?*

Having observed his characters and himself fall off the "spiritual Snakes and Ladders board," Lodge concludes:

> Christian belief will be different from what it used to be, what it used to be for Catholics, anyway. We must not only be-

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lieve, but know that we believe, live our beliefs and yet see it from outside, aware that in another time, another place, we would have believed something different (indeed, did ourselves believe differently at different times and places in our lives) without feeling that this invalidates belief.

Another present-day English writer, Philip Larkin, from a different Christian denomination to which he is clearly much less faithful, tells us about riding by a church on his bicycle on a Saturday afternoon. He entered it, found it empty, looked around at the altar, the stained glass and the heavy door; all seemed divested of religious significance. Larkin decided nonetheless that "A serious house on serious earth it is / . . . If only that so many dead lie round." David Lodge attempts, in this very fine novel, to make us share Larkin's feeling. When everything one does or thinks is "subject to spiritual accounting," as in the case of Lodge and his characters, the needs of the soul are more important than the needs and desires of the body. The modern popular novel has devoted itself to the body alone; Lodge joins an honorable and great tradition by restoring the primacy of the soul in fiction.

JOHN PODHORETZ

John Podhoretz has written for *Harper's*, the *American Spectator*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

BRIEF REVIEW

Witness To Power: The Nixon Years by John Ehrlichman

(Simon and Schuster, 416 pp., $14.95)

One of the advantages of turning in a book review late is that you get to see the author, in this case John Ehrlichman, parade before you on television and radio talk shows. It is quite an experience to see the affable, candid, and altogether winning Ehrlichman on the tube and then step into his bog of a book, the insults, the putdowns, mean asides, and snipes rising up and up until you think you will gag on his bile. The book should come with a clothespin for the nose.

But oh, what fun it is! Here are all your favorite cartoon characters right out of the longest running strip in American political history—the Adventures of Richard Nixon. No one—but absolutely no one—comes off well. Mel Laird is characterized as a wily hack, the man appointed to the Senate to replace Everett Dirkson is called "someone named Smith" and also labeled a "hack." John Dean wrote an "error-ladden book," Donald Nixon "lacked the wit" to make something of himself. Senator Hugh Scott was (you guessed it) "a hack," the late Hale Boggs was "a mean and heavy drinker," social workers were "mostly Yale graduates with pangs of conscience" who "pandered to black malingerers," "most Washington reporters were basically lazy or burned out," Senator Sam Ervin was nothing but an actor and not too bright at that, Shirley Temple Black had become a "matron of more than ample girth," Henry Kissinger was duplicitous, Spiro Agnew not very bright, and Richard Nixon . . . well, Richard Nixon was just plain bats.

He canceled a campaign stop because Billy Graham and Jeane Dixon told him his life was in danger. He used his wife and children for campaign props. He was obsessed with trivia. He sometimes drank too much. He could not fire a man. He had no backbone, and thought that those who did had no loyalty. He tapped his own brother's phone. He wanted to use the Secret Service to rough up hecklers, referred to himself in the third person as "the President," and his own dog would not run for him on the beach. But John Ehrlichman would.

In the end, of course, Ehrlichman went to jail for Nixon—for the things he did for Nixon, at any rate. The experience has left him understandably bitter, all the more so since Nixon apparently thinks that a little stir time now and then is part of the job description, certainly not worth mentioning. In fact, he has never said anything to Ehrlichman—not so much as a phone call. This has to hurt.

But truly, theirs was a match made in heaven. One suspects that Ehrlichman is better than his book if only because he could hardly be worse. He spends almost no time on such matters as morality or ethics or policy. The Vietnam War is nothing more than the backdrop for some anecdotes. So are civil rights and the Supreme Court and Congress. Everything and everybody is reduced in scale here, made petty and nasty and not at all likable. This book is all sex and no romance. As politics goes, it's porn.

Which probably accounts for why it has become a best seller. It is not well written (indeed, it is barely edited) but it is a good read—fast and breezy, loaded with sentence fragments and paragraphs that seem to have floated randomly into place, as if the book had no center of gravity—which, in fact, it does not. In and of itself, though, it does raise some important questions, not the least of them being what in the world are we going to do about this matter of Presidential assistants?

Ehrlichman the Presidential aide, it turns out, just happened. He had no real political commitment and no real political expertise. He got into the game as an advance man, found it fun, and managed to both work and charm his way into the Nixon inner circle. One suspects that his chief attribute was the affability he exhibits on television, but the memos he reproduces in his book are not only better written than the book itself, but thoughtful and workmanlike. For the most part, he confesses to giving Nixon sound advice. He was a good staff man, but not a very good man.

He leaves us (me, at any rate) a bit worried. Whatever you might think of Richard Nixon, he was a pro. The current occupant of the White House has, by any standard, no expertise at anything save crooning into a microphone. He rises late, naps early, learns little, forgets most of that, and then goes to bed. His staff was once supposed to be the very best there was—an assessment that has now been revised. But good or bad, they seem to be running the show.

We await their books.

RICHARD COHEN

Richard Cohen is a columnist for the *Washington Post*.

NOTE TO OUR READERS

We are pleased to announce that contributing editor Anne Tyler's new novel, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, has just been published by Knopf.

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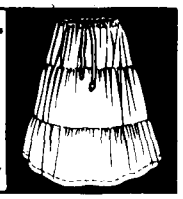

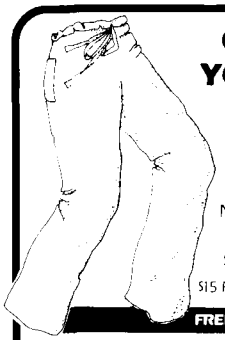

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New Orleans Diarist

Carnival

"THE AIR SMELLED OF green things," wrote Robert Stone in *A Hall of Mirrors*, his 1966 novel about New Orleans, "of black soil and blossoms mixed with river and damp old stone, grinding coffee and something that might be saffron like you could smell in the Mexican parts of Port Arthur." This sense of fecundity, of decay, of closeness is nothing like the feeling of the Washington I had left three hours before, a city that seems hard and new and barren. New Orleans is rich and lazy and confused—drunk not so much on bourbon as on rich desserts and oysters in cream and cayenne. And this confusion is never more apparent than after an election, an event which invariably brings all of the city's zaniness out into the open.

"AIN'T NOTHING but trash," said the black woman sitting in back of me on the Desire bus (no longer a streetcar), as it rolled along the edge of the French Quarter two days after Dutch Morial was reelected mayor of New Orleans. "Trash!" she said to her companion, also on the way to work on Canal Street. "Supposed to be a diamond necklace, but you can't find the diamond with a microscope. I mailed it back to them and told them that I talked to my lawyer and he says I should sue. I want my nineteen dollars back fast." But the main subject of her discourse was Morial, the city's first black mayor. On Saturday, March 20, he soundly beat a 31-year-old white state legislator named Ron Faucheux (pronounced "FO-shay" here), 100,725 to 88,573. Morial won, in large measure, because the black turnout was higher than the white—75 percent to 74 percent. The turnout in a New Orleans municipal election is always high by national standards, but this one was exceptional. The white establishment of New Orleans, which had supported Morial in his race four years ago against an unsophisticated City Hall pol named Joe DiRosa, turned against him this time, backing the urbane Mr. Faucheux, a man more at home in Washington than New Orleans. Among the white leaders who endorsed Faucheux was Moon Landrieu, who preceded Morial as mayor and then became Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for a time under President Carter. Landrieu is known as a racially enlightened politician, so his dramatic last-minute endorsement of Faucheux was seen as the *coup de grâce*, the end of Morial's declining hopes for reelection. Instead, the endorsement enraged black voters, who thought that Landrieu was betraying them and showing his true colors.

"LANDRIEU'S A DOG," said the lady on the Desire bus. "He's a dog. And I'm so *proud* that Dutch won. He showed them." The *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, a newspaper normally discreet and obfuscating, ran a remarkable front-page post-election interview with Morial, who finally released all of his pent-up rage. He complained about being held to higher standards than white politicians, and hinted at reprisals against his opponents: "I don't know why people want me to deal politically differently than any other mayor. Is it because I'm a nigger? Because I'm a nigger, I've got to be s--- on by everybody else? The white people who have held this office have been able to do what they wanted. Is it because I'm a nigger that I'm supposed to let everyone s--- on me? That's what it boils down to. I've got to be gracious to everyone?" Let Washington worry about budget cuts, safety nets, and El Salvador. The issue in the mayor's race in New Orleans was: is Dutch Morial too arrogant? "Arrogant," it seems, is the new euphemism for "uppity."

NEW ORLEANS, a city in which I lived for seven years, is a banana republic. This is no casual metaphor. New Orleans has all the attributes: an economy built on agriculture, minerals, and tourism; an oppressive climate, featuring a natural disaster or two every year; comic and venal politicians; and crazed taxi drivers. The tourists are steered to the sleazy bars and T-shirt shops of Bourbon Street and to restaurants like Brennan's and Antoine's, long past their prime. The locals sing and dance and labor as domestics for a pittance. And the streetcar rolls through an arbor of oak and magnolia, past bushes bursting with color.

LIKE OTHER BANANA REPUBLICS, New Orleans is an oligarchy—but one in which the ruling class is on the decline, and so exercises its power through symbols. Its crowning symbol, of course, is Mardi Gras, which occurred this year between the primary and the run-off elections for mayor. The night after the election, Morial told a story that explains why New Orleans is different from every other city in the United States: Morial was in the reviewing stand on St. Charles Avenue when the Rex parade, the most important of the fifty parades of the Mardi Gras season, passed by. The parade features the aristocrats of New Orleans, who are masked and on horseback, while lesser members of the krewe (or parade club) stand on floats and toss beads and fake coins to the crowd. One of the masked riders was Morial's political nemesis, a member of a prestigious city board. As the rider approached the reviewing stand, he jerked his horse's head away from the mayor and toward the river in an obvious equine snub. You can hardly blame Morial for being uppity right back.

WHITE NEW ORLEANS leaders, even of a moderate stripe, are afraid that Morial will become even more uppity in his second term. They talk about a "bloodbath"—not the literal kind that's predicted every summer in the dense housing projects of Algiers and Desire, but a figurative one. Morial has already asked some of his political opponents to resign (he called his eight most prominent foes "the Gang of Five, Plus Three"). "I'm not a hater," he said. "I never have been. But I've been severely wounded by people whom I helped at some point but then was turned on because I had to tell them no." Now he wants a little revenge. It's hard to say whether Morial's being uppity is good or bad for New Orleans. The testy mayor will get little cooperation from the legislature, upon which the city has to rely for much of its money. On the other hand, his reelection has made a lot of black people—the ones on the receiving end of the beads and fake coins tossed during Mardi Gras parades—very happy and, yes, proud. And his victory probably marks the end of the line for the rule of those masked riders of St. Charles Avenue.

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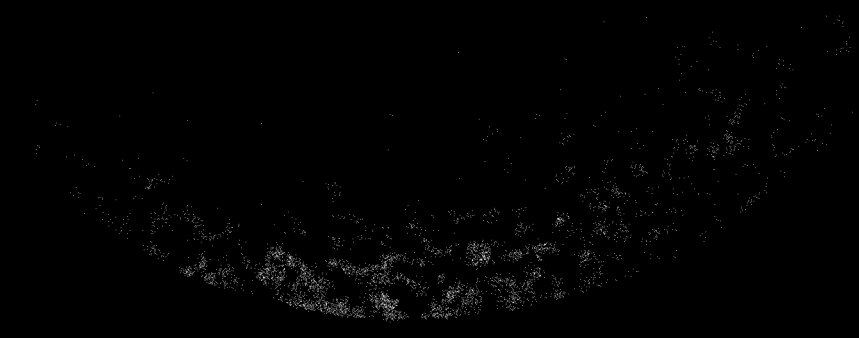

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